

# AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

Vol. XIV

JANUARY, 1905

No. 6.

## CONTENTS

Cover Design . . . . .	Thomas Mitchell Peirce	
A Belated Harvest. Novelette . . . . .	Marie Van Vorst	1
The Sheepherder. Short Story . . . . .	B. M. Bower	52
Two Women. Poem . . . . .	Emma A. Oppen	57
Renaissance. Short Story . . . . .	Margarita Spalding Gerry	58
Song in Winter. Poem . . . . .	Clinton Scollard	65
The Phantom Ha-Ha. Short Story . . . . .	Vincent Harper	66
The Social Side of Chicago. Essay . . . . .		73
The Master Hand. Short Story . . . . .	Kilbourne Cowles	79
The Waiting of Palermo's Jacob. Short Story . . . . .	Holman F. Day	87
The Best Laid Plans. Short Story . . . . .	Joseph C. Lincoln	94
The Paternal Burglar. Short Story . . . . .	Cyrus Townsend Brady	101
The Fatal Florozonde. Short Story . . . . .	Leonard Merrick	105
The Tooth of Time. Poem . . . . .	Arthur Stringer	111
The Confessions of a Club Woman. Essay . . . . .	M. H. Vorse	112
The Golden Butterfly. Short Story . . . . .	Edith Macvane	121
The Problem Browning Set. Short Story . . . . .	Cosmo Hamilton	139
The First Impression and the Last. Short Story . . . . .	Robert Hichens	145
The New Year. Poem . . . . .	Margaret Houston	148
Some Dramatic Surprises . . . . .	Alan Dale	149
For Book Lovers . . . . .	Archibald Lowery Sessions	156

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, \$1.80

SINGLE COPIES, 15 CENTS

Monthly Publication issued by AINSLEE MAGAZINE CO., 156 Fifth Avenue, NEW YORK.  
 Copyright, 1904, by Ainslee Magazine Co., New York. Copyright, 1904, by Ainslee Magazine Co., Great Britain. *All rights reserved.*  
 Publishers everywhere are cautioned against using any of the contents of this Magazine either wholly or in part.  
 Entered September 11, 1902, at New York as Second-class Matter, under Act of Congress of March 2, 1879.

*A Nutritious Food=Drink for all Ages*

# HORLICK'S MALTED MILK



A compact, delicious lunch for the traveler o'er land or sea—highly nutritious and digestible—ready any moment. A healthful and invigorating food-drink, invaluable in car- or sea-sickness. More wholesome and recuperative than tea, coffee, or cocoa. It is pure, rich milk from our sanitary dairies, with the extract of selected malted cereals.

In powder form, a delicious beverage may be prepared with either hot or cold water. In Lunch Tablet form, it is always ready for solution in the mouth. A palatable, nutritious confection—a convenient quick lunch for every member of the family, old or young.

Purity, excellence and uniformity are insured by costly apparatus and elaborate precautions.

*At all druggists.*

Sample mailed free upon request. Our Booklet gives many valuable recipes, and is also sent free, if mentioned.

Ask for HORLICK'S; others are imitations.

Horlick's Food Company, Racine, Wis., U. S. A.

Montreal,  
Canada.

London,  
England



**Shakespeare's  
Seven Ages**

**6th: "With spectacles on nose"**

# AINSLEE'S

VOL. XIV.

JANUARY, 1905.

No. 6.

## A BELATED HARVEST

By Marie Van Vorst

Note.—Miss Van Vorst is the author of "Philip Longstreth," a popular novel, and, in collaboration with Mrs. John Van Vorst, of "The Woman Who Toils," the book that provoked President Roosevelt's famous letter on "race suicide."—The Editors.



MISS DESMOND and her niece were, at this off season, well-nigh the sole guests in the Palace Hotel, dominating in ostentatious magnificence one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. To Miss Struthers the prospect promised the epitome of dullness; but "being alone," at all times, in all places, was so in the lines of the other woman's existence, that it aroused in her only the sensation of familiarity. To be one of some half dozen people in a vast caravansary planned for the comfort of hundreds—"with the Alps coming in at the window," as her niece expressed it—was not, to Virginia Desmond, desolation.

"*Pas un chat!*" Miss Struthers scanned the list of names in the entrance hall. "Not a soul to exchange a word with—but you, Virginia."

She accepted the situation—a two weeks' *tête-à-tête* with her aunt—without grace.

"Thank Heaven I don't know you"—she gave thanks for this as they found themselves alone in their apartment; "it should consume a fortnight for two

women to find each other out—and it will be a diversion."

To her niece the aunt extended an agreeable background of unobtrusive companionship, and in Miss Desmond's impersonal atmosphere Molly determined to expand delightfully. She adored talking about herself, and she would recount to this unspoiled Puritan her numerous social successes, her various love affairs.

The ladies, cast upon each other's mercies, passed many afternoons on the balcony of their salon.

Miss Desmond reclined delightfully, her head resting against the pillows of her chair. But she was likely to become animate, as her niece's histories warmed and multiplied, until she found herself finally sitting bolt upright, her eyes fixed intelligently on the girl whose temperament Miss Desmond found was a puzzle.

During certain palpitating paragraphs in the young lady's romances, Miss Desmond's eyes would leave her for the lake-filled depths of the distant valley. Toward the end of the day a mist often stole along the face of the water, effacing the intense blue; a mist shot through for a passing moment with the

myriad colors of sunset, until it shimmered and glistened like an image of the Grail; then, paling, phantom-like, it changed from brilliance to a deathlike somberness, and, obscuring the valley, slowly mounted, blotting out all forms of life, and only the pinnacle of the hotel-crowned mountain rose at length, baffling the fog.

Miss Struthers hated the phenomenon, but Miss Desmond grew to wait for it. It symbolized to her the fatality, the inevitable monotony which, in the face of brilliant, changeful existences around her, was the reality of her own life; and when the spell of her niece's confessions was broken, she felt herself slip back into the shadow—colorless—effaced.

In a rare pause, she asked:

"Shall you ever tell your husband these—*adventures?*" (Carefully choosing a word which gave the color of sport and amusement to what, in her thinking, was not a shade less than heartless coquetry, disgusting flirtation.)

"My dear! I shall tell him enough to make him jealous—and in a manner to disarm him! The best way to treat suspicion is to appear naïve."

Molly Struthers, born in New York, educated in that city, had been from the year of her début a cosmopolitan, living in the course of her short life the varied existences of Paris, Rome, London, with the attendant summer Villes d'Eaux, part of a gay suite led by her mother, Lady Morges-Fair, and badly chaperoned by her stepfather, Lord Morges-Fair.

At the present moment her mother's interests (narrowly personal and at a point where the proximity of her handsome daughter was an interference) demanded that the girl should absent herself for a time. Molly's convalescence, following an attack of typhoid, gave an excuse, and to chaperon her retreat Virginia Desmond had been summoned from her home, a white pillared colonial house in the vicinity of Boston. In this lovely, old, agreeable and respectable dwelling, ever since her elder sister's first marriage, *éclatant* divorce and brilliant second marriage, Miss Desmond had been cloistered, dusting the family

traditions, and keeping what blots she could from the 'scutcheon.

They had been in Caux for a week, and it had taken this time to exhaust Molly's chronicles. The auditor had been so successfully impersonal, that Miss Struthers was unconscious of the impression she had produced. She had not observed the expressive features of the other woman; had not seen her eyes darken, suffuse, and even open wide upon pictures of life to which she was a stranger. She had not seen the blush steal to a cheek unmistakably virgin. And that she had excited in her listener's breast a host of feelings hitherto dormant she was entirely unknowing.

But Miss Desmond was aware that a change had taken place in herself. Accustomed as she was to analyzing herself, after the manner of the Puritan, she endeavored to subject her conscience to a strict questioning. For a week she had listened in silence, in absorbed attention, to things which if she had read in a book she would have thrown the volume into the fire.

She had on this particular evening escaped to her room, and was dressing for dinner. The arrangement of her coiffure was as foreign to her eyes as her niece's experiences to her understanding. The hands of a Parisian maid had, during the last days, transformed her headdress; at its appearance her habit revolted, but her taste hesitatingly approved. She was beautifully coiffed, but the look in her glass offended her. As she turned her spiritual vision upon her late attitude of mind, she saw a state of affairs her severe conscience, with its keen sense of honor, refused to condone.

Not only had she listened without reproach, *but she had been completely carried away by her niece's recitals!*

She had envied her niece—certainly not the procession of adventures which, even as she recalled them, made her cheeks flush, *but life*—

With a step unusually slow, she approached her niece's room and opened the door. Miss Struthers, in dressing gown, with hair disheveled and eyes unusually animated, was coming toward her, a card in her hand.



"I was just coming to you, Virginia. Bobby Bedford has arrived. Did you ever *know* such luck?"

The other mechanically took the card. "John Robert Bedford, King's Oaks, The Greaves."

It read delightfully to her American eyes; it had an absolute savor as she murmured it aloud. But suddenly the card she held well-nigh fell from her gentle hand. The name crossed her memory like a flame—something that pained and seared. The fire flashed, as it were, into her face; Miss Desmond blushed. Her grave eyes sought her niece—scarcely dared meet the bold gaze of the little worldling.

"You won't, of course, see him, Molly?"

Miss Struthers was too engrossed by the emotion of pleasure and surprise evoked by Mr. Bedford's card to understandingly observe her aunt.

"See him?" she repeated, irritably. "That is just it; my head is too dreadfully bad." Her fingers fluttered, as she put up a lock of her disheveled hair. "It was *Bedford* I was telling you of on Tuesday. I can't go down, I am blind with pain. Be a duck, dine with Bobby—and after dinner you can both come here and smoke on the balcony."

Miss Desmond did not notice the equivocal permission.

Molly's attitude—the age she felt the girl's experiences had given her, an age which seemed considerably greater than Miss Desmond's—the shame of being unable to frankly say out what she thought, the shock which the state of affairs was to her, made the Puritan a coward. And she only murmured in reluctance:

"Oh! dine alone with an entire stranger?"

Molly exclaimed, crossly: "For Heaven's sake, Virginia, you are not afraid of a man, are you?"

Miss Desmond withdrew a little into a fine shell of reserve, and instantly wished above all things that her niece should not guess her feelings.

"No," she said, with a charming smile, "I am not afraid of a man, Molly—not in the least afraid. I will ask Mr.

Bedford to sit at our table with pleasure."

Mr. Bedford, in the green and yellow room of the Caux Palace Hotel, stood as he had stood for countless numbers of times in his life, looking through his one good eye and his really necessary single glass at nothing and yet at all things. All things, because as a man of keen observation he saw them every one; at nothing, because he had found them to be generally void.

The room where he waited was gaudy, glaring and strikingly new. Odors of good cigars and cigarettes, the smell of the fire—a huge one in the giant fireplace—the aroma of coffee, mingled with the smell of new stuffs and newly polished floors. The environment seemed crude, unmellow, to his fastidious taste.

The Englishman had sent his card to the daughter of the beautiful Lady Morges-Fair, and he now awaited the appearance of the young lady, or a word to signify her pleasure. Bedford liked Americans rather better than his own countrywomen, and his unflattering cold shoulder to the beauties of the realm caused the *mauvaises langues* to insinuate, in retaliation, that his attentions were compromising. His complete understanding of women, his intelligence and indifference, had made him a favorite. He was in reality drugged with admiration, too accustomed to an amusement already tame—lacking as it did the elements of sport, danger and uncertainty. The time he waited in the great hall grew unconscionably long. He beckoned to a servant and repeated his message to Miss Struthers—then walked over to the arch of the long expanse of window, and looked out.

Directly in front spread a terrace, graveled to its edge. A curving walk rounded the esplanade, overhanging the sheer cliffs and mountain side. Early as it was, the tall iron lamps were lit; from the top of each staff fell a cluster of lights that, fine and small, drooped in little graceful bunches from the rounded stem of the lamps, like *feux d'artifice*, or

like luminous grapes. In the intense brightness of the sunset they shone pale lemon yellow.

Beyond rose the pinnacles and peaks of the dark, flanked mountains of eternal snow.

Bedford felt it infinitely still, marvelously remote from everything with which he had been in contact for months.

He had lately been living at highest pressure, more nearly carried out of himself than he had ever thought to be. A woman had absorbed him to the extent that, had she been free, he would have married her—in no matter what state of life he found her. More, a man of his traditions and instincts could not say. She was not free; should he link his life with hers, he would be obliged to form part of a circle, which, although familiar, and in a way part of his daily social bread, he had until now prided himself upon believing he might seek or leave at will.

The beauty and, to him, charm of this woman had brought him to the point where he was about entirely to cast in his lot with her—when . . . Something out of a cloudless sky occurred to reveal her to him—and he had paused.

He was still sufficiently under her spell to plan his acts with reference to her, and he was here at Caux at this moment, to do one of two things—to flirt so seriously with the daughter that the mother would suffer; or (if he could bring himself actually to take the breach) marry the girl. Woman and womankind had been for him very much comprised in Lady Morges-Fair. She had seized on his life, and she was still part of him; unless, as he hoped to do, he could scourge her from his blood and sense and emancipate himself, he must link himself to her environment.

His thoughts too readily swerving from the abstract contemplation of snowy pinnaced mountains to the things of sense, he began to regret London, and felt an impatience with himself at his presence here.

He changed his position, walked over to the other window, then looked down

upon fields of narcissus gently stirring on their tall stalks. The tide swayed to and fro, clean, pure and dazzling; there was something about it that made him think of a marriage veil. He turned and faced the room again, and came out from his mental retreat and from the atmosphere which had fallen with an immaterial impressiveness across the commonplace and grosser tenor of his usual life. As he did so he gave a violent start. Unexpectedly, impossibly true, but still, to his near-sighted eyes, true, the woman he had run away from stood before him!

Surprise sent the blood into his cheeks. His heart thumped. With an exclamation too warm for the welcome of any but one person he went quickly forward as the lady advanced. Her lips opened as if to welcome him, and, when the two were nearly face to face, each saw that the other was a stranger. She maintained a surprised and startled uneasiness as she passed him, and went over and sat down at a small table. He stepped aside with a murmured apology, and bit his mustache with vexation at his stupidity. Then he turned to look at her.

She was in the full light that flooded the wide expanse of windows, and he quickly discovered the plausible reason for his error; she was strikingly like and strikingly unlike the London beauty.

Bedford observed every woman until she displayed a commonplaceness which excused a second glance. But on this sole occupant, save for himself, of the big room, his look rested until he began to feel she would be conscious of his observation.

She was slenderer, more slight of build—she lacked the ripened, mature loveliness of his late innamorata. Other details of difference or resemblance he had not time to mark, for here the servant returned with a little note in whose twisted form he recognized the hurried message of a woman who is just dressing or just on her way to you.

My aunt has gone down to join you. You will dine with her, and then come up like a good boy to see me after dinner. Fetch something to smoke. We are all smoked

out. When you see Virginia, this will appeal to you as humor. MOLLY.

There was nothing in the scrap of scrawly writing different to scores of notes he had received from others of Molly Struthers' type. But it jarred. It had a blatant little voice that cried out and harmonized with the garish room. It offended his taste.

Into the serenity of the light, fast fading and growing cold, blended the figure of the woman, distinctly strange and distinctly familiar. He went directly over to the table where she sat.

"I beg pardon, but I can't be wrong. You are Lady Morges-Fair's sister—aren't you looking for me? I am Robert Bedford. Miss Struthers says you are looking for me."

When Virginia had left her niece half an hour before, she was not consciously on her way to Mr. Bedford—she was escaping. A whirl of instructions, a taunt, galloped indeed so near to her ears that they tingled. But she was brave now to face her thoughts, and she tried to do so, as she figuratively ran away from her niece, and still farther away from the unwelcome guest.

"Don't you remember what I told you about Mr. Bedford last Tuesday?"

These words of Molly's had hardly any need to fall into place in her mind. Oh! Virginia remembered! Never had she so intensely wished to forget anything in all the annals of her unsullied life.

In the New England calm and peace of her home, she had followed her sister's tempestuous career with the charity of love and the pain which a nature instinctively pure must suffer when it comes in contact with—let us say, the *mistakes* of its less spiritual kind. But what of Mr. Bedford?

What Miss Struthers had said—or rather implied—was impossible of accurate repetition, or even of clear recalling. Vague, intangible, the implication had caused the listener a pang, an ache of grief, a deep displeasure. She had longed to rush to her sister, to prove to herself that what the daughter had significantly implied was a horrible false-

hood. That day Virginia had felt as though she were deep in the cobweb game; a prisoner in a hopelessly tangled mesh of invisible threads. But, alas! it was no game! And a crude, very real sense of disgust, an up-welling of pity, a harsher anger and judgment, arose in her whenever she thought of her sister. She had wept that night alone in her room, and the following day been *distrained* at the Continuation of the Arabian Adventures of her giddy niece.

With all her unworldliness, Miss Desmond was too intelligent not to read (since indeed they were held close to her eyes) between the lines, and there she came face to face with things which at first made her revolt and tremble.

She had at once forborne, with a fine sense of loyalty, the least exclamation that might seem to the daughter disapproval of her mother.

But this, then, was the man. His existence—as with distinct mental pain she had approached the subject from time to time—she had tried to ignore. She had endeavored to think of him as a dreadful myth, a menace, but never a real person. Absolute goodness, goodness that exists before temptation, does not contemplate with comprehension the reality of evil.

Virginia, to herself, had denied, refused to believe. She had forced herself to recall Beatrice as a girl—willful, egotistical, lawless. She had tried to summon all that she could of spiritual beauty in order to exorcise the shape of this wrong; and in her innocence she had well-nigh done so; her belief in Beatrice had begun to cradle itself peacefully as in the past, when—Bedford came! He was here in the flesh, the wicked flesh, and she realized that she was actually going to break bread with him.

Therefore she had flown. Her revolution of feeling was so great that to appear in the drawing room and conventionally welcome him was not for a moment possible; she therefore went out in the open air to breathe. She wanted respite between a path of unsullied memories and this introduction to a puzzling world.

That her niece ignored what she made evident to another, Miss Desmond gladly attributed to some lingering innocence in the girl. This view of the case put her own duty in another light. Any definite position on her part against Bedford would be a mistake. What right had she to introduce a suspicion into the thoughts of her sister's child?

Unconsciously she left the hotel, and her steps directed themselves toward the narcissus field, and before she knew what she was doing she had stooped and gathered her hands full of flowers.

Flowers were her passion. She knew them intimately well. Her garden at Denby was a marvel of loveliness. She had lived in it, grown up with it—it represented her. She would give this bunch to the *maitre d'hôtel* for her table—*her table!* She was to share it with this strange and wicked man! She put her flowers together, and slowly dragged her unwilling steps back into the hotel. Hospitality forbade her to shirk the trial imposed upon her—her relation to Molly presented her with the situation as a duty. She trailed her black dress slowly along the hall—her fine clear brows gathered a little over troubled eyes. She murmured to herself a singular query:

"I wonder if Beatrice realizes that there is twelve years' difference in our ages?"

Standing in the window of the hallway was a tall man. The Don Juan, undoubtedly. She could not speak to his back. What should she do? She grew fairly faint with embarrassment, and so stood uncertainly for a second or two, when he turned, and to her horror and amazement hurried forward with an exclamation of endearment, both his hands outstretched to her.

The next thing she realized she was seated away from him by a little table alone, the great bunch of narcissus before her—strong, sickening, sweet, they filled the room. Her heart seemed to beat through their perfume. Her cheeks were hot. His mistake was too evident to her—terrible—startling—corroborative—convincing; he had mistaken her for *some one else*, for no other than Be-

atrice Morges-Fair! *That* was then the way the women are met by the men who—cared where they were—what they did; that illumining of the face—of the whole self; that quick, open-handed delight, coupled with impetuous words whose distinct sense she had not caught—had not dared to think of. That greeting for another, she had surprised, seen, almost touched. Her sister had no right to it! *And yet Virginia Desmond envied her!*

When she had reached the end of her momentary excitement and determined to know what had become of the man whom she must greet in decency, she was conscious that he had crossed the room to her, was actually at her side.

A few hours later (Miss Desmond would have said some fifty years later, for she had lived several little lives in the time) from a corner not so near as to constitute her part of the group, yet not so distant as to be quite excluded, she extended the propriety of her society to her niece and Robert Bedford. On a frame before her, her embroidery occupied her eyes; but her thoughts, *pêle-mêle* and all of a tangle, were in no wise on her work. They distressed her, they hurt her as though they were physical, and yet for the first time in her life they were so full of excitement, they were so real, so vigorous, that she would not have lost them for the world.

The voices of the others were audible—her niece's lowered so that her sentences were lost; Mr. Bedford's replies, had she listened, she could perfectly have heard; indeed, she had a feeling that he wanted her to hear. Molly had cleverly thwarted the ravages of pallor and fatigue by her rouge stick and her black pencil, but Miss Desmond did not need to darken her eyes or redden her cheeks. Her face, bent over her work, was quite transformed, but there was no one to observe it.

The preceding two hours had swept past her with a swing, a rush, a pace and character inexpressibly different to any previous part of her life.

She had followed, rather than led, her guest to the dining room, and with the

greatest timidity, a certain excitement and sincere and deep distaste, found herself *vis-à-vis* at a small table in the window—a foot of damask, an epergne of narcissus, between herself and the wickedest person she had ever met!

"He doesn't *suspect* what I know of him!" was her sole comfort, and it brought with it the power to treat him with guileless, gentle courtesy. She was exquisitely sensible that to be the cold and forbidding creature she felt would be to take him unawares, at an unfair advantage. And no evil-doer ever took a more utter advantage of a loophole to favor! Bedford, naturally unconscious of the severe, pure judgment in which he stood, was his most attractive self. The absence of the younger woman was a relief, and whatever feelings his *vis-à-vis* inspired in him that night, he was at pains to please her, at pains to charm and interest her; and when a man of Bedford's type is put to his mettle, he does not fail.

Miss Desmond did not see that he ordered champagne until it was poured out in its amber, fine-beaded effervescence in her glass. Then she started and put out her hand with a startled:

"Oh, no!"

"You're not temperance, are you?" He had looked surprised.

"No, not exactly," she had temporized; "but there are two or three families at Denby where the husbands are drunkards. I visit the women, and I have thought—it seemed to me it might give them a certain strength if they knew there was no wine at The Pillars."

"I see," he answered, with gentle understanding, "and I dare say it is a strength." With no further reference to the drunkards of the neighborhood, he took up the thread of his interrupted conversation. His wine with hers untouched, the sparkling liquid effervesced, grew dead, but there were other stimulants at work. He talked of London, of Lady Morges-Fair. At his first word of this, pain sprang to Virginia's eyes; her color faded, her flesh grew cool. But what he said, he said so naturally, so admiringly, so simply, that if it had not been for the meeting in the drawing

room she would have clasped the belief that Molly was horribly mistaken.

They lingered over the dessert, or, rather, Virginia, despite herself, had been held spellbound by the unusual presence of a man who apparently asked nothing better in the world than to talk to her—to put to her swift questions which she gave herself pains to answer; questions whose personalities escaped her, in her interest.

At length, when she rose guiltily, and Bedford indolently responded, it had pleased her that he showed no alacrity to move toward the salon where Molly waited in an impatience that was almost a fret.

"What scandal do you pine to hear?" she heard him ask. His voice was frank, cool and familiar.

"Oh! the latest," Miss Struthers laughed.

"And the truest?" Bedford added.

"How does that follow?"

"Because it's only when the news is fresh that you get near to the truth; after everyone has taken his little more or less vindictive hack at it, it's so different that its own mother wouldn't know it."

"Or," returned the girl, sharply, "its own daughter."

There was a pause.

Bedford smoked in silence; his cigar was finished, and he leaned over and from the box on the table took a cigarette and lit it with slow precision. As he did so, he glanced to the corner where Miss Desmond's head bent above her tapestry.

"There are," he said, slowly, "no new disgraces—I think they all have the dignity of age; let them lie, and you should not talk about them, anyway."

The young girl gave a frank nod toward her aunt, as though she understood what he meant.

"If you are playing the game of 'children should see and not understand,' it's too late, Bobby," she said, sharply. "I wasn't brought up that way."

He coldly misunderstood her. "I don't know what you mean."

"Nonsense! Don't be stupid. I have

never heard of anything but scandals, combined with a certain amount of fashions, clothes and money, discussed in my life, and you know it."

"Is that all—really?" he asked, with more interest in his tone than he intended to display.

She softened at once. "Well, you know, I don't mean what some men have talked to me about when we were alone—that is another story altogether."

This Virginia did not hear; it was a murmur blown out behind the smoke of Molly's cigarette.

"It's a pity," he slowly followed.

She looked at him in a surprise that was almost impertinent in its frankness.

"Virginia!"—she raised her voice. "Mr. Bedford wants to talk to you! Come out from behind your cage. He is moralizing—he wants you to hear him."

Bedford rose, and, going over, put away the little embroidery frame.

"Yes, do come. Let me bring out your chair, will you? Come and talk to us. I'm not moralizing—I don't know how—but I want to hear some more about New England; tell Miss Struthers and me about your garden."

Molly's health so visibly improved that the following day, a superb afternoon, warm as June, yet fresh with spring, Bedford suggested that he should take them down to tea at Terriet.

Miss Desmond had been ready for some time, and sat before the writing table in their salon, closing a letter to Lady Morges-Fair.

"Don't write her that Mr. Bedford is here, Virginia."

Miss Desmond looked quickly up at her niece, and asked:

"Why not?"

"I don't believe he wants mamma to know."

Virginia speechlessly poised her pen above the paper, with a sickening sense of being part of a double game, which she not only found mysterious, but from which she shrank in repugnance.

Miss Struthers, in a short-skirted green dress, with scarlet at her cuffs and

collar, drew out a pair of immaculate white gloves, and looked amused at her aunt's mystification and evident disapproval. Miss Desmond again asked:

"Why does he not wish it known?"

Molly lowered her voice confidentially:

"I think he must be horribly out with mamma. This is the first time in two years that he has gone away from the places where she is sure to be. I have no idea why he is here! I'm not such a fool as to suppose he is *in love* with me, and of course I can't actually ask him! But mother does not know he is here—he has not told her—and whatever his idea is, he is a good sort, and he's always contrived to make me like him, and I am not going to *faire la bête*."

"But I have already told Beatrice."

She lifted up the indiscreet page as though what were written were unalterable. The daughter shrugged.

"Well, if you send it, mamma will leave for Switzerland to-night."

Here Bedford knocked, and entered.

"How smart you are—you both are."

He looked first at Molly, and then at her aunt. The latter's gray gown was a Boston dressmaker's ideal of a traveling dress, and became her well. Indeed, she felt a certain immodesty in wearing it, thinking it too close fitting. Her hat was black, and she picked up from the table a pair of gray gloves. She was confused and troubled, and hostile toward Bedford. Molly could not let the inappropriateness of his remark go by.

"I may be smart, but Virginia is distinguished. I have sent to Paquin for the wherewithal to turn her out in new plumage." But Bedford, who experienced great satisfaction in the appearance of Miss Desmond, hastily cried:

"Oh, don't! Don't let them dress you like a Frenchwoman! Your own clothes suit you so absolutely well. In that dress you look like a gray dove." She was at that moment anything but dovelike toward him, and was about to speak when her niece said:

"I have been persuading Virginia not to mention to mamma that you are here."



Bedford colored, warmly for him, and he flashed out quickly the same word Miss Desmond had used:

"Why?"

It was unexpected.

"Oh! don't," said Miss Struthers, "pretend you are not of my mind!"

Miss Desmond's eyes were on the wrists of her gloves; she heard him say:

"I hope you will write whatever you think fit. There is no earthly reason why Lady Morges-Fair shouldn't know I am here if she wants to. It isn't a matter of any importance. Come—if you are both ready; the *finiculaire* will start in seven minutes."

She glanced up at him, delight and pleasure in her eyes. She had experienced an agreeable shock. The air was easier to breathe.

"I will post my letter," she said; "it is quite ready."

She put it into an envelope, already stamped and addressed. Bedford extended his hand.

"Give it to me. I will hand it to the porter as we go out."

He pioneered them down to the terrace of the Grand Hotel, and although the temperature was alluring for outdoor pleasure, there was scarcely anyone abroad at this hour of four-thirty.

A couple of English old maids were seated at a table near the one which Bedford chose for his companions. With the exception of these people, more types than human beings, the three were alone to enjoy their surroundings. Miss Struthers said to Bedford:

"You were here last August, with Prince Battinani and papa and mamma, weren't you?"

"Yes, we came in a motor from Aix."

"Well," she laughed, "Virginia and you and I make quite a different party, and why you want to come back again, under these circumstances, I can't imagine! I never like to do anything twice, for my part. If I have a good time I don't want to spoil it, and if it has been a bore, I don't care to take any further risks."

Miss Desmond had gone over to the

balcony of the terrace. Sheer below her, the lake, intensely blue, caressed its stones with a pretty little lapping noise. On the surface of the water, in a white bunch, all close together, a flock of young gulls rocked and cradled.

"And Miss Desmond, what does she think about repeating her pleasures?"

She slowly turned to Bedford, her enjoyment of the loveliness before her brightening in her face.

He had, a half hour before, set himself right with her. She was for the first time cordial to him; she looked up smiling. "Oh! Nothing has ever happened to me worth repeating! My days have been so alike I wouldn't know which one I was reliving, if it came back again! See, the man is bringing the tea."

After they were seated before their little table, her eyes wandered to the neighboring group of English women. While Bedford and Molly exchanged their usual banter, half *spirituel*, half sentimental, she studied the English spinsters. The scant unloveliness of their attire, the hard stiffness of their formless bodies, their wrinkles, their close-drawn, straggly hair, gave her a sense of pity and disgust, and, with horrible shame, a feeling of affiliation. The story of the loveless, uneventful lives was written on their bones and angles, on their dried skins, as if the substance were a parchment which time had prepared for the transcription of the tragedy of their barren, passionless existences.

So significant were they of a class to which doubtless she belonged, that a dull anger stirred in her heart against fate, against life, against these women, against herself. With the revolt in her gentle breast was a pathetic desire that some one should contradict her and say:

"You are not too old for a man's love! You are not like those women! Your bones are small; your flesh is lovely; you are still a woman, not a thing."

With this longing she withdrew her eyes from her human study, and met Bedford's fixed upon her. Her niece's shrill voice was saying:

"Bobby finds you so awfully like



mamma. Only, as I say, you're twelve years younger; really handsomer, and there is no question yet about *your* being preserved!"

She laughed maliciously, a note of spite in her voice. She was jealous of her mother and her conquests.

"Make tea, Virginia, will you? I hate doing it."

The subject of Lady Morges-Fair was one which Bedford neither courted nor shunned, when it was introduced. He said some polite, admiring thing. That was all, and he never spoke of her of his own accord. To Miss Desmond this implied too great interest in the subject and good taste, combined.

It was always for Robert Bedford an agreeable pastime to observe Lady Morges-Fair's sister, when she was unconscious of the scrutiny. She was so singularly like the other, and so—*unlike*. He had not decided as yet what adjective, in this latter case, to use.

The face of the younger sister was spiritual where Lady Morges-Fair's—to use one word in place of another—was sensuous. Her spinsterhood to Bedford signified not years, simply the fact that she was wonderfully virgin. She had never lived! And after several close perusals of her face he had decided it only needed that she should love, in order to be transformed. She was a candle, vestal-like, chaste, waiting for the flame to brighten it; to inevitably destroy it in natural sequence, but to give it an excuse for being. Her fine, well-made mouth should soften in order to be capable of its fullest beauty. Her eyes should obscure and deepen. A veil should pass, as it were, over her too tranquil loveliness — be lifted — and then . . . ! Virginia Desmond would be a beautiful woman—very much more beautiful—he decided it this time frankly—very much more beautiful than Beatrice Morges-Fair. He said, aloud:

"Your sister is far and away the best-looking woman in London; and if it is not too bald a compliment to say you are tremendously like her, please let me say it!"

Thus to be linked in this man's mind so closely with the woman he illegiti-

mately loved gave Virginia a feeling of acute distaste.

"I have not seen her for a great many years," she replied, coldly. "I suppose we shall find each other very much changed."

Here, having by some favor gained an entrance into the garden, a couple of strolling musicians made their appearance, a man with a violin and a woman with a guitar. They stood a little way from the tables. The man played a slight prelude, and the woman began to sing *Ninon*.

Ninon, Ninon, que fais-tu de la vie?

L'heure s'en fuit, le jour succède au jour.

Rose ce soir, demain fletrie.

Comment vis tu, toi qui n'as pas d'amour?

Aujourd'hui le printemps, Ninon, demain l'hiver.

Quoi! tu n'as pas d'étoile, et tu vas sur la mer!

Au combat sans musique, en voyage sans livre!

Quoi! tu n'as pas d'amour, et tu parles de vivre!

Moi, pour un peu d'amour je donnerais mes jours;

Et je les donnerais pour rien sans les amours.

Qu'importe que le jour finisse et recommence

Quand d'une autre existence le cœur est animé?

Ouvrez-vous, jeunes fleurs, si la mort vous enlève.

La vie est un sommeil, l'amour en est le rêve,

Et vous aurez vécu, si vous avez aimé.

The singer's voice was sweet and agreeable; she sang with feeling, did not mouth her words, and Miss Desmond understood them all. Miss Struthers leaned her elbows on the table, linking her white gloved hands together; after a glance or two at Bedford, who was smoking and looking out at the lake, she followed her own thoughts. Miss Desmond pulled down her veil—her profile was to Bedford. She was absorbed by the music; it attracted her, challenged her, mocked her, flung at her the terrible, unexpressed melancholy of her state. She felt her heart swell. Unused to such strong feeling, she grew actually frightened, lest she should weep. Her cheeks crimsoned under her veil. She bent her head a little and looked down

at her hands in her lap; they were trembling.

The two old maids rose before the song was over, and ambled out of the inclosure. Virginia saw them go with a relaxed tension. She no longer felt herself of them. The song had not even been heard by their dulled ears. She was alone with the spell.

With the last notes, she ventured to raise her eyes, and to her intense confusion found Bedford's fixed on her. To conceal the emotion on her face she rose quickly, but as she did so found her dress held down by his chair. He exclaimed, and as he rose to set her free she felt he forced her eyes to meet his, and in the look she gave him, flung at him rather, there was something of defiance. But her face was illumined.

If Molly noticed her agitation she gave no evidence of it. "Have you got your pocketbook, Virginia? Give those poor things five francs, Bobby. The woman has a jolly voice, and I adore that song!"

Miss Struthers but slightly absorbed Bedford's time. He responded with less and less sentimentality to her. He had not expected to love the girl, but he had hoped to find her sufficiently neutral to be able to forget her. But she jarred, and his reasons for ever thinking of marrying her grew less and less apparent to himself. He had been far from supposing that he should find her at Caux so inadequately chaperoned; he had foreseen the aunt a New England spinster, severe and repellent—not that Lady Morges-Fair's New England traditions or her New England education had restrained or fettered her! Miss Desmond was never severe, but she was sometimes repellent. He minutely compared her to her sister, and it interested him to mark the differences. One had translucent depths, and so profound that only the eyes' limited vision failed before the treasures of the heart and nature were discovered. The other was like a brilliant, dazzling surface whose scintillations it was dangerous to look upon too long.

The control Miss Desmond had ex-

erted on the first night at dinner to treat him as though she had heard nothing of his life and reputation was not always equal to the strain. There were times when she was more than reserved with him—she was repelling.

Bedford, whose knowledge of women was perfect, was for a time at a loss to understand her rapid changes of attitude toward him. But whatever the subtle hostility meant—whatever her cold, delicate reserve implied, he decided he would transform and change it. It piqued and amused him. After a little reflection, he concluded that Molly had prejudiced her by some incautious reference. Unpleasant as the idea was, and inconceivable to his good taste, which never was at fault, however far his morals might err, he nevertheless felt sure that this was the cause. Sometimes he wondered if she remembered his strange reception of her. If so, it completely fixed, of course, in her mind, her belief in his relations with her sister. Scarcely amused, not a little embarrassed at the remembrance of all his impetuous gesture had implied, he set himself to win her entire favor; to alter, if possible, any preconceived idea she had to his detriment, and he never won from her one of her quick flashes of sympathy that he did not find it irresistibly charming and feel repaid. He had long since decided she was not provincial; she was unspoiled, a discoverer to whom even the most worn beach was new country. She had come from a virgin shore, everything to her was curious and strange, and the man the strangest of all, as far as Virginia Desmond was concerned. She might have been primitive woman face to face with the only man in the world; but in this case her Adam had the experience of a million gardens in his ultra-civilized mind!

That evening, as Bedford turned at the terrace end to walk back to the hotel, Miss Desmond came out of the hotel by the lower door. She was in dinner dress—over her shoulders a mantle he especially liked, of black soft stuff with little tinkling beads of fringe.

He threw away his cigar, and joined her.

"What a good idea to come out! We have a long quarter of an hour to dinner. Will you walk a little? I have a confession to make, Miss Desmond."

"Oh!" she breathed, "but why to me?" And then, with a spirit of *tacquerie* new to her, she said, smiling, "I believe you have many!"

Bedford laughed. "That," he cried, delightedly, "is a hall mark; you have betrayed the Puritan!"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, you take sin for granted, rather than goodness."

"Are you good?"

He deprecated. "What do you think? You have seen me for five days."

"You have been good to me," she hurried. "I mean to say, wonderfully kind and courteous. So patient with all my questions about Europe! You have told me so much—and so delightfully, and the books are a pleasure. I can't be grateful enough; you have been good to me."

"Who," he said, quickly and warmly, "would not be, if he had never been before in his life?"

Miss Desmond held with one hand her long dress from trailing on the stones; with the other she drew together the edges of her wrap across her breast.

"And since," he continued, "you have nothing to complain of (at least, so you say), why won't you so judge me?"

"I can't." She looked as though it were against her will, however.

"Well," he laughed, "it is a stiff preparation for confession. But I fancy I'm like the rest of men—you know what that means."

"No," she replied, and flushed ever so little. "No, I don't at all. You are the only man I have ever known."

He was silent. Her words came to him with a shock. Her phrase placed them both, as it were, on a desert island; as though it were the dawn of a new day, unsullied; as though he saw her standing there, before him, clear-eyed, clear-souled, and she challenged him to reveal life to her, and mankind, and his individual self. If ever Bedford wished for a spiritual sponge with which to ef-

face his past, it was now! His voice showed feeling when he spoke.

"I am sorry," he said.

"Oh!" And she repeated, in surprise: "Sorry?"

"Yes, to be the first, since I am what I am! Because, if you had known others, you could be more merciful to me. You were right when you said I had many confessions to make. We pride ourselves, you know, in being up to the average in morals; to go beyond is vulgar—not to live is stupid. And the *milieu* we attain is, I must say, not inspiring. Still, it is life, you know, and in the world we pass for gentlemen."

He threw his hand out with a gesture almost apologetic.

She listened without comment.

"You said—you had something to say to me especially?" she reminded him.

"Oh, yes," he said. "The letter you gave me—"

At once, with a puzzling inconsequence—for she had courted his confession—she felt as if she could not bear that Bedford should acknowledge an infidelity regarding this message. She paused in her walk, her eyes—she had a fashion of keeping them from him—met his now in sweet gravity; there was reproach in them. She put out her hand imploringly.

"I gave it you to post—you made me feel quite sure there was no mistake in sending it. If you have not done what you promised, please don't tell me—I don't want to know."

His attentions to Miss Struthers had consisted thus far in keeping the ladies' salon supplied with flowers, in sending to London and Paris for such books as conversation revealed from time to time that Miss Desmond had not read and must read; in planning delightful excursions that took them hither and thither over the surrounding country into Savoie, and to Lausanne and Geneva.

"You seem to be making a study of Virginia," Miss Struthers said to him one day. "I suppose she is a riddle to you."

"No—why a riddle?"

"You are right, there's nothing to un-

ravel in her. I mean, it's astonishing to see how any intelligent twentieth century woman can be so——"

"What makes you stop?" Bedford smiled. "Say it out. There are lots of words—innocent, unsmirched, ingénue. But it's not that—it's innocent."

"Well, yes; that's the word—how can anyone be so innocent in our family?"

His face betrayed his distaste, and he affirmed:

"I am not studying her. I am enjoying her. It's a delight to be with some one who so frankly enjoys; her pleasure is so sincere, so new, and it's a rest, a relief, I am bound to confess it, to associate with a woman who is not *au courant* with all the——"

"Don't stop, Bobby," kindly urged Miss Struthers.

"With all the nastiness and vulgarity and cruel gossip and worse *truth* of our set," he said, coldly.

"How nearly rude you are!"

His eyeglass had dropped; he replaced it; his face flushed, and he turned to her with a certain apologetic eagerness.

"I don't mean to be rude. I mean that she is good for us. I am glad to be with her—I like to have you with her. I wish that you might spend months with her."

"Thanks," Molly said, sweetly.

"I am not posing," he went on. "I own frankly to all Miss Desmond would shrink from, if she saw and knew it as it is. I am afraid she must despise me if she ever knows me well."

Molly, looking at him keenly, softened a little. He was actually moved, and she recognized a soul-sickness in the man. She thought he was making comparisons between the sisters, to the detriment of the absent.

"I am out of sympathy with the things her life has been made up of—I suppose I should suffocate in Denby—but that doesn't prevent me from appreciating the exquisite creature she is."

"But," softly interrupted Miss Struthers, "you don't want to spend months with her—poor Virginia!"

"Hush!" he said; "don't pity her—for Heaven's sake!"

"But I do!" she cried, warmly; "it's just what I do! Why, she knows nothing of life. She makes me think of a bell with no tongue in it. She's got no resonance, no echoes—there's nothing to speak. And, *mon cher*, after a few days more of our society, and the books with which you are educating her, and your attractions, Virginia will pity herself."

Then he said, quietly: "We are not good for Miss Desmond."

"No," agreed the girl, complacently, "but we're none the worse for it. I'm glad you're not in love with her, Bobby, because——" She laughed.

"Why?"

"Because one of you would have to come to the other's level, and I can't imagine it!"

Here the appearance of the lady herself cut short any further discussion regarding her.

Miss Desmond saw very little of her niece alone. She had lived so long a solitary life that she was unused to the constant companionship of any woman. She had never known a confidante, or given to the freedom of words the intimate analyses of her aspirations. And now that she had, in very truth, sentiments and shades of feeling to have tickled the most feminine curiosity, and uncertainties to provoke maddeningly complicated discussions, she wished for solitude more than ever.

Bedford said to her: "Do you know, I have compared you to those mountain peaks, to the narcissus, to snow, and to all sorts of other white, cold things. But lately those resemblances are all incorrect."

With an abruptness sudden for her, Miss Desmond asked: "Well, what am I like, then?" It was perhaps as personal as she had ever been.

Bedford looked at her directly and said: "You are like something that has come to life."

She flched all she could of isolation in which to pursue her absorbing thoughts; she had a possession at last of her own, something so great that her heart was not big enough to contain it, or rather it was expanding, that it might do so and

not break her slender side. She would have liked to pass her time, when not where Bedford was, alone in her room, seated before her window, the air freshly blowing upon her, and in utter seclusion rethink and relive every hour of her existence since she had first seen him in the drawing room of the hotel. Her annals were so simple hitherto, she could remember having really cared about so few things, and she was not a woman to have ever imagined herself absorbed when in reality no bit of her vitality was engaged. She smiled to think a garden could ever have filled her time. She smiled with something like pain to remember the routine of her colorless days, and the New England village, the New England house, and the life grew to be to her a shell cast off. To think for a moment that she could go back to it, and take up that existence again, made her rebel with vehemence; and the thought of any other happening, any intense and complete change in her life, was comprised in one sole event—which event, it is not too much to say, came to this woman with an intensity that almost disembodied her.

Their time was passed out of doors on walks and tramps over the hillsides. They traversed the Glion woods, or lazily, during the hours in the late afternoons when light prolonged itself into the evenings, they would boat on the lake, Bedford paddling them hither and thither. For a party of three, they were uncommonly congenial. Miss Desmond's rôles were varied. They depended on her niece's moods. Molly at times would throw herself into Bedford's society, or with remarkable ease plunge herself into a distraught silence and seem to disassociate herself quite from the other two. Then Miss Desmond and Bedford would talk, and delightfully touch, it seemed to her, upon every subject in the world; or else they would be silent, all three, and to one woman, with her hands clasped in her lap and her face raised in the translucent spring light, the entire universe was comprised not only in the circle of that single Alpine lake, but in the oblong of one little boat.

As for her niece's sentiments for Mr.

Bedford, Virginia endeavored not to think at all. She did not want to know what they were, to tell the truth! Even an astute reader would have found Miss Struthers' character baffling. Volatile and careless, light and incapable of deep and serious feeling, as she seemed, she would display from time to time a kindness of heart and sincerity of purpose that put her in an enviable light. Frank to rudeness, or suddenly caressing, almost tender, she won in the few weeks of her sojourn the heart and affection of her aunt. One night she said:

"I am not *gauche* enough to say I wish you had been my mother, but, dearest, I have an admiration for you that tempts some expression, so I do you the compliment of saying I wish I were almost like you."

Miss Desmond laughed.

The clothes from Paquin had arrived, in spite of Bedford's advice, and Molly, according to her fancy, had clothed her aunt. On this day she wore a crimson dress of soft, transparent stuff, as thin and delicate as the petals of a poppy. The vivid tint threw into bright relief her fair hands, and her skin as lucent and as fine in texture as a flower. It was a beautiful dress, and when the Puritan had seen it first it dazzled her, bewitched her, almost terrified her; she could hardly wait to put it on. She now said to her niece, with humor:

"I give you leave to copy my clothes!"

"No, I couldn't, even if I have helped to create them, and when I said almost like you I meant——"

But Miss Desmond interrupted: "Don't tell me why you don't want to be *quite* like me. I know just what you would rather die than be."

"Oh, come!" expostulated Molly, amused.

"Yes," said the other, "and we cannot exchange, you know, for what I would take from you willingly, perhaps you would not part from."

Miss Struthers showed surprise. "Take from me!" she exclaimed. "Why, what in Heaven's name is there in such a silly little fool that you would envy, Virginia?"

"You think," said her aunt, "that to have lived past thirty years and never to have loved, even ever so little——"

She paused, her breath was in her throat; she threw her head up a little, as though in defiance.

Following hard, as this conversation did, on the one with Bedford, it made Miss Struthers start.

"You think it is pitiful," finished Miss Desmond, "and so do I."

Molly came over, and between her fragile little hands she lifted the other's face. "You are a sphinx, Virginia; I never would have dreamed you could be so subtle. I shall take you to London, and let it turn your head."

That night at dinner, before they left the dining room, a man from one of the tables near sprang up suddenly as he observed them, and came over toward them. Molly recognized him at once, gave him both her hands with effusive cordiality. "Mr. Schermerhorn, how awfully jolly!"

A tall, keen American, with clear eyes and no suspicion of a twang. He bent his good-humored, intelligent face on the group, but he looked with a quick, appreciative look at Virginia, as though he remembered her, and said, joyfully: "Lady Morges-Fair! Don't say you don't remember me and our drive from Cannes to Mentone."

Molly laughed ecstatically, and Miss Desmond colored to her hair.

Bedford, for some occult reason, could have wrung the man's neck. He impossibly saw Miss Desmond in the man's motor, and though he knew that it could not be, never was, and that he had confused her, he was angry—he was angry. He said, disagreeably: "Mistaken identity," and he fixed the man with a stare that was as nearly rude as Bedford had ever been in his life.

"This is Lady Morges-Fair's sister, Miss Desmond."

But before the American could be abashed, Miss Desmond had smiled upon him and said, with great graciousness: "It is a compliment to be taken for my sister, and I am only sorry that I have not the drive to remember."

"Well," said Schermerhorn, breezily,

"that is easily mended! My sister, Mrs. Carstairs, is with me; you must meet her. We can have a drive from Territet to Geneva, only the route is not up to the Corniche."

Thenceforward Schermerhorn and his sister, Mrs. Vernon Carstairs, a representative of another Anglo-American marriage, attached themselves to the trio Bedford, Miss Desmond and Miss Struthers formed.

Mrs. Carstairs was an innocuous, light-headed little creature; blond, restless, nervous, a victim of insomnia and headaches, and of a tender interest in her own health and welfare. She was pathetic in that she was about to become one of two dislocated members of society. She waited for her divorce from her husband, and, pending the suit, had thrown herself upon the generous mercies of a good-natured brother, who extended her the protection of his company and the amusement of his automobile.

After this, the tenor of the peaceful days at Caux was broken. There was no possibility of automobiling in the region, and Schermerhorn's machine was his *raison d'être*. Mrs. Carstairs was *en route* for Divonne, and she pined to be dosed into calm and health again. She gave, therefore, no peace to her friends until they decided to go down by way of Geneva to Divonne for a few weeks.

Before they left Caux Schermerhorn found it easy to forget his short and dashing acquaintance with the London beauty in the sweeter society of the more lovely sister. Like most Americans, he had nerves; they were awakened and keen, but not like his sister's—diseased. He was rapid, intelligent and decisive in his points of view. His vigorous, wiry physique showed it; his short, sharp manner of speaking betrayed his contempt for hesitation. He had not seen Miss Desmond more than three days before—if not in love with her—he knew he preferred her to all women he had ever seen.

In contrast with his openly expressed



admiration, his decided and evident preference, Bedford was his antipodes. It was not evident to either Mrs. Carstairs or Schermerhorn which of the two ladies he admired; he was courteous to both, and to both apparently indifferent. By Miss Struthers he was appropriated, and Miss Desmond gave no evidence whatsoever of her sentiments. But Bedford was indolently basking in the society of a woman whose existence was fast changing the phase of the world for him. He was not at first conscious of the fact, and when it began to force itself upon him, was unwilling to accept it. Marriage had been a thing on which his thoughts had never dwelt; it would not be sincere to say they had never touched, but he had discarded the image.

The American women whom he knew in London were different to their Anglo-Saxon sisters, in their brilliance, perhaps, in their *esprit*, in their dash; but the kind of woman whom he could consider as a lifelong and indispensable companion, one whose beauties and graces of mind should develop and unfold every day, he had never seen; and in Virginia Desmond he was slowly convinced he had found her. To win her approval he would have made many sacrifices, and he had grown to appropriate her in his thoughts; with a natural imperiousness of character and nationality, he apportioned her to himself, and when Schermerhorn appeared and stood near her and frankly made court to her, Bedford rebelled.

Very possibly the sense that between them, in her mind at least, was the shadow of her sister, made his campaign slow and subtle. It was not until they had been together at Caux for several weeks that he seemed to find the image of Lady Morges-Fair displaced in his mind. His knowledge of women came to his aid in winning this one. Even before he fell in love with her, he understood her with a perception made very fine and penetrating by years of study of the feminine nature. He saw that she was not cold, but unawakened; there were things in her heart against him; there were codes in her morals his life had violated. Her points of view—as he

surprised them, forced them into sight on subjects of morals and ethics—were just and pure and rigid, and Bedford, reviewing his life, was convinced that he fell short of them all. As a dictatorial Puritan, he would have hated her, were she never so beautiful; as a Puritan, warm-blooded, human and capable of great development, he so understood her, and he determined that he would warm her to life. He was passing through a regeneration, as far as he was concerned himself. But he had no intention of making to her a sentimental appeal for a sweet absolution by explaining away what he supposed she would call "sins" in the life of a worldly man who had not scrupled to enjoy existence. He wanted to win her love, and he believed, when once won, that Virginia Desmond would not condemn.

As far as Schermerhorn was concerned, he had no campaign. He one day told his sister quite frankly that he intended to marry Miss Desmond.

Schermerhorn followed automobilizing with the technique of a *mécanicien* and the intense enjoyment of the sportsman. On the day his party left Geneva to automobile to Divonne he was buoyant, utterly *entrain* and boyishly delighted to have arranged so well that Miss Desmond shared with him the front seat. He was in love, and instead of casting him into a tremulous melancholy it piqued his ambition and enterprise.

"I am born to luck," he reflected, "and, with me, to love must mean to win."

When he had spun his motor out into the lakeside road, he turned to Miss Desmond.

"I have a definition of my own for sport: 'A game in which you risk your life.'" They were slowly puffing their way along the quays, over cobbles, uphill toward the highway. "Hunting and shooting are, of course, in the category, but this is the king of amusements."

At this early hour of the day there were few people to claim the right of way; even the trams ran infrequently, and the route from Geneva to Nyon was pretty well their own.

Schermerhorn enthused. "This is the



keenest excitement, the greatest pleasure so far discovered! As we go on into civilization and wants become more intense, sensations more difficult to awaken, we require to stimulate us just the rush and the flash this motion has. We're impatient, restless, ambitious, and this sensation gives us the sense of *arriving* at the swiftest possible speed. Oh, you will love it!" He smiled confidently to Miss Desmond.

"This is my *début*," she replied; "the first time I have been near enough a machine to find it intelligible."

Schermerhorn nodded. "That's a nice expression—'intelligible.' You will discover it has a voice; it talks to you, and for you; you'll understand it perfectly after a little. I have just about lived in mine; there's scarcely a road on the continent I do not know by heart. One of my ideals"—he paused and lowered his tone—"is to take the woman I love all over the world on my machine."

"And if," Miss Desmond objected, a little cruelly, "she would not, by some chance, consent to go?"

"Oh, I don't admit *that*!" he laughed.

"There is an old saying," she returned, "that runs: 'Those travel the swiftest who travel alone.'"

He said, hurriedly: "If that unfortunate case should really happen, I should never automobile again. I have always been happy in my machine, confident of success; and if I found that I really had to run it alone, in that sense—I would give it up."

In the tonneau, Bedford and Miss Struthers were contemplating the blue, immaculate surface of the lake, the clear outlines of the mountains, and enjoying the radiant air.

"Bobby," his companion said, "you have given me all the view."

"I have you to see," he laughed.

She corrected him: "To look at." For she wore a thick white veil which completely disguised her face.

Here Schermerhorn said: "I promise not to speed my machine so as to frighten you;" and his words were caught by Bedford.

"Don't!" Bedford exclaimed, curtly.

"For God's sake, if you really think that sport is 'risking your life,' that is all very well; but the question is just how much right you have to risk anybody else's."

"Oh, how cross you are!" exclaimed Miss Struthers. "Don't you like to risk your life?"

"No," he said; "not unless it is absolutely worth while."

The long route before them from Geneva to Nyon sped under their wheels like a flash; they seemed to ride on the air. Schermerhorn had chosen his day well; there was not a cloud in the sky; its blue, intense opaqueness spread over them like a curtain, and, sportsmanlike, he had chosen this way to woo Miss Desmond—to carry her out of herself, to win her a little as they drove. He knew he could not be heard by the others—the wind carried his words away and not back—and his short, broken sentences ran in quick accordance with the motion of his motor.

He talked to Miss Desmond, not making direct love to her, but playing around it. There was nothing picturesque or beautiful in the landscape which they passed, except the lake itself and the blue-flanked, white-topped mountains; and as they turned from the waterside at Nyon, Schermerhorn said: "I am glad we are getting away into the country again. I have thought a lot about taking you into this pretty part of the world. It is France, you know—or it soon will be. We are going to cross the border very soon, and it is the garden of the gods."

Miss Desmond exclaimed: "France!" almost with awe. "Tell me when we cross the frontier, will you? I want to know."

They had startled the small, peaceful streets of Nyon with their importunate, rushing noise; and a quick turn shot them into the dazzling white road that leads from Switzerland over the French border. Between miles of fields on one side and the distant specters of the Alps on the other, rose the black, velvety obscurity of the Jura, whose mountains seem to climb up the horizon like a purple wall.

For Bedford, in his corner of the tonneau near to Miss Desmond, the ride was not utterly spoiled. What Schermerhorn was saying to his companion, or its purport, he did not even care to amuse himself with imagining. Miss Desmond was near to him; she could see the edge of his coat sleeve as she turned her head a little—it touched her arm—and, although Molly was talking gayly and he had to give himself the trouble to reply in short monosyllables, all that he had of thought and sensation in this swift ride was for Miss Desmond, and she felt it.

The fields were yards high; the tender, green, formless balls were scarcely the shape of wheat and oats. The trees were in frail life, the blossoms, pink and white, floated through the foliage like clouds in emerald heavens, a heavy sweetness filled the air.

As they took the road again, Schermerhorn pointed to the lines of red roofs, a cluster of trees, a handful of white huts at a turn in the way.

"That," he said, "is the *douane Suisse*, and just ahead of you is France."

Miss Desmond turned a little, her profile to Bedford.

"We are going into France," she said, softly, "and it is for the first time in my life."

He heard her, was conscious that she spoke to him alone, and gracefully and charmingly. She appeared to invite him, and him alone, to enter the new country with her.

He could not reply, for Schermerhorn, who was leaning a little toward her, said, under his breath: "I cannot tell you what it means to me to flash you like this over the country. I only wish the fates would let me run away with you forever."

She laughed. "It would be quite up to your definition; it would be risking our lives."

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed, seriously; "don't say that. It would be the making of one of them, at least."

The first words of love that she had ever heard fell coldly on Miss Desmond's ears. But she, nevertheless, was full of excitement. The rush of the

automobile, the intoxication of the blossom-filled air, the sharp, sweet fragrance of every breath she drew, the near proximity of Bedford, stimulated her, and her senses were tense as a harp's strings.

They sped at a dizzy swiftness for a few seconds until the cross of the Swiss *douane* slipped behind them in the distance, out of sight.

Along the side of the Jura a thin veil of late snow still clung like a mist.

Miss Desmond, her hands lightly clasped in her lap, looked steadfastly before her to the unwinding of the fast-disappearing road; the machine seemed to devour it, and fling it behind them again as though it consumed space and annihilated it.

They neared Divonne. Schermerhorn swung over the bridge, past the old church and the *Place*, its fountain with carved basin. The charming old, huddling houses around the square—houses yellow and pink, covered and brilliant with roses—clustered down close to the roadside.

To Miss Desmond, France delightfully obliterated Switzerland, and the country was instinct for her with charm.

With a subdued humming, but still with a pretentious sweep, the motor followed up the little turn of the hill, and sagged in through the iron gates of the hotel courtyard.

All that was visible of one of the most celebrated water cures of Europe were two single-storied, unobtrusive houses, dating back into the early thirties. Pink and yellow stucco, with low porch doors, and dusty stairways that wound in and out of a very network of green, against walls covered by a mass of *Gloire de Dijon* and tea roses. Across the gravel of the court sunlight fell in fine bars of gold. The trees, a mass of them, darkened one side of the space with cool shadow, and in the center a giant chestnut shone, a vivid mass of green in the sun. Under its grateful shadow were seated a group of bridge players. Directly in front a little restaurant cheerfully disported its red and white striped awnings.

"Isn't it lovely, and old, and sweet?"

Miss Desmond said, softly, her eyes shining with delight.

Mrs. Carstairs, catching sight of them, rose from a small table and came briskly forward in a pale mauve dress—a perfect bit of summer elegance, gloved, hatted and veiled, her parasol in her hand. She greeted them effusively. "Oh, it's so awfully, awfully nice here! I've got suites for you all in the new building—hot and cold water, and salons, and everything you could possibly want. This old part"—she nodded to the mellow houses—"is just rotting to pieces. It ought to be taken down."

"You haven't got a suite for me, have you?" asked Bedford, quickly.

"I have ordered ten rooms altogether," she counted.

"Well"—he cast an affectionate look at the little house in front of which they stood—"I shall put up here if there's a corner left; it's quite the jolliest little place I've ever seen. Most of us can't live in the houses we want, and I will try my luck at this one." He turned to the proprietor to arrange.

Little Mrs. Carstairs was in her element at Divonne. Her nervous system and her ails and complaints had all been taken methodically and sympathetically in hand by men whose business it was to understand these subtle, sensitive wrecks—the nervous modern woman. She had been *douched* and *massaged* and dieted to her heart's content, and the singular cosmopolitan groups into which she had fallen amused and interested her.

In the well-chosen apartments she had selected the party passed the next few days very much at their ease.

One afternoon Miss Desmond came out alone into the courtyard to meet Schermerhorn, who had asked her to walk with him; he stood waiting for her under the great chestnut tree, and observed her appearance with pleasure as she appeared from the low eaves of the little restaurant's portico. Her dress was muslin, flashed through with little red rosebuds. Around her shoulders a fichu of white fell, caught in at the waist and floatingly following the line of her dress to its hem.

A little later they found themselves in a sheltered park traversed by the Divonne River, the coldest, clearest and most delicious of streams; river, so-called, but in reality nothing more than a boisterous brown brook, running with a tempestuous race over rocks and stones, after shaking showers of drops up into the sunlight; a stream so vocal that even the far distance is filled with its sound, and all Divonne sings with it.

Miss Desmond's mind was not absorbed in the man with whom she found herself alone. She had not imagined that he had carefully chosen this time to bring her here. The park was deserted. After they had walked a little way up the stream along the path at its side, Schermerhorn stopped still and faced her, and said, in his quick, authoritative manner:

"Please wait here a minute, will you? There is something I want to say to you." He threw his figure back, planted himself squarely on his feet, thrust his hands in the pockets of his sack coat; his face underwent a rapid change, altered its rather too keen expression, and its hard lines softened. "I brought you here to talk to you," he said, quickly. "I have got you at last out of that crowd of people, and away. There is so little chance I can find to talk with you; I have tried to see you for days. I am prepared to have you tell me that we have known each other a short time, that we are hardly friends, but that doesn't make any difference. It is all of my life—it is all that counts for anything. I love you."

Miss Desmond stood by a bush of dwarf apple. It was in radiant bloom. In her fine, soft dress, her floating scarf, she had the air of being part of the blossoming tree; and as if she felt this kinship, and, like Daphne, was about to transform herself into the senseless wood, in order to escape this sudden chase, to protect herself from too violent storm of her hitherto unassailed citadel, she unconsciously drew a great branch of the tree down to her and held it; it fell across her breast, the little pink and white petals fluttering against her. Between herself and Schermerhorn it was

a flowering guard. She needed none. Schermerhorn was the American man in love; although a strong and ardent nature, he was worshipful of the woman, and, though not timid, approached her in the most chivalrous way. He grew pale, his eyes deepened, and, as he looked at her, she felt that he traversed herself, as it were, seeking for the spirit that he could never find, that never would exist for him.

He repeated: "I love you. I fell in love—I thought I did—with your sister, and I dreamed of her until I knew you. That was all nonsense, of course; it was as though somebody should think of a picture, you see, you are so very much alike; and, of course, when the real person comes along, you never think of the picture again. It is you I want, and I want you to be my wife."

He came and took her hands, and held them firmly as he found them among the blossoms of the tree. Virginia's eyes were fastened upon him in wonder and pity. She was surprised at herself, and, strange to say, more conscious of her own feelings than responsive to even the quality of seriousness in the man. It was her first sight of declared love; if not curious at the contemplation of it, she was amazed at the transformation of this man who trembled before her.

She breathed: "I am so sorry, so dreadfully sorry!" and yet she knew that neither great grief nor great pity nor anything that approached a deep feeling could be in her heart, even for a few moments, in regard to Schermerhorn; she felt herself selfish and ungrateful—cold, indeed.

He caught his breath. "You mean, then, that you do not care?"

"Yes."

He shook the hands he held a little. "Oh!" he objected, "you will, you must! You see, I will make you; I will learn how to make you."

"You never can."

His voice, which had had hope in it and warmth, changed in a trice to all of pain. "Why," he demanded, "why do you speak so suddenly and so cruelly? What is the reason that you seem to cut me out of any hope, even?"

She did not speak. His passion had only set free her own, and more completely; and her thoughts flew to Bedford as though his image, as she summoned it to her, must protect her now. And so Robert Bedford profited by another man's love.

"Why," he repeated, "why can't you love me? Let me hope! Leave me a little bit of courage, and, at any rate, don't forbid me to love you and to wait. I would rather you didn't tell me anything decisive now—just let me wait. I have been too hurried—too impetuous."

But now, more distinctly even, Miss Desmond felt the spirit of rebellion at this undesired insistence. "You must not wait," she said; "it is not any use to wait. I can never care for you in the way you mean."

He allowed her hands to go free; the blossoms had crushed against her white gloves; she let the branch swing back. She had no need of anything between herself and the man; her own indifference became on a sudden a powerful screen. The eyes of the lover had, of course, as they gave her the impression of doing, looked directly through her, with that thirsty avidity of love that seeks for the soul, the intelligence, the thought and the ego he longs to possess. Schermerhorn, in a flash, caught sight of her real self in a cruel and a frank revelation. He exclaimed, illumined: "It is because you care for some one else." He fairly threw his charge at her, and reddened until he was almost black under his thick coat of sunburn.

"Oh!"—she defended this surprise almost angrily—"you have no right to say that!"

Schermerhorn interrupted: "I have; where a man adores a woman he has a right to know what is keeping him out of her heart. If you are free, I shall never give up."

She moved away from the tree, and held out her hand to him with a frank gesture that showed him how little she feared to give him even that much of herself. "Good-by," she said, gently.

He caught her hand and cried: "Good-by! You mean that I must go

away from here? You won't let me even stay in Divonne? You are cruel, cruel!"

The word surprised her. No one had ever called her that.

"Oh, I don't *mean* to be!" she cried, with pain in her voice.

"You drive me away as if I were a ruffian who had tried to steal something from you. Of course I shall suffer; but I shall not let you see any difference. You will let me stay, won't you?" He detained her by her hand.

Here Bedford flashed across his mind as a distinct personality and a rival, and all the implications of his friendship with Lady Morges-Fair as well. Schermerhorn disliked the Englishman. "By Jove!" he exclaimed. He dropped her hand, and in spite of himself the words sprang to his lips: "You do care for some one, and I know who it is."

Miss Desmond, now tortured, angered and at bay, flushed crimson and said, with eyes that lost all their dovelike gentleness: "Will you let me go, please? And if you ever speak to me like this again, why, I never want to see you." And she moved on past him, as though she would leave him unforgiven—a victim to his haste and his unfortunate love. But as she started out from the little park the figure of the proprietor and one of the doctors came rapidly toward her; their haste suggested to Miss Desmond disaster at once. They were up to her before she knew it; they were looking for her—she could see it.

"Madame," puffed the proprietor, "madame, there has been an accident!"

Schermerhorn came forward, and, laying an authoritative hand on the proprietor's arm, said in French:

"Don't frighten this lady, please."

And the doctor, who was a trifle behind, took up the words which the too-frightened hotel keeper had not been able to finish: "There has been an accident to the automobile; the other lady and the gentleman were out in it together."

Miss Desmond's voice seemed to stick in her throat. It was impossible for her to get it to her lips. "Are they dead?" she faltered.

"Ah, no, madame—*calmez vous!*"

But, far from calm, she seized his hand in both hers and looked at him directly. "I cannot calm myself," she said; "but if they are dead, do not tell me so!"

Just what information this feminine injunction would have forestalled is impossible to say.

"What is the matter?" Schermerhorn asked, calmly, of the men. "Now, please tell me in as few words as you can, and as quickly."

"The lady is badly hurt—very badly hurt. I am afraid it is as bad as it can be."

Miss Desmond still held his hand, her face perfectly colorless, her eyes fastened on him. The doctor, who was well used to the questions which women ask with their eyes and never with their lips, answered hers.

"The gentleman has not even a scratch."

She let his arm go. The color, in wonderful waves, swept over her face.

Thus Schermerhorn saw her. "Come," he said, gently; "try to be as calm as you can. We must go to them at once."

It was Miss Desmond who led the way to the hotel. Schermerhorn and the doctor could scarcely keep up with her flight. She passed like a flash through the gay crowds of people in bright, kaleidoscopic dash of pretty dresses and past the chattering groups in their chairs, and disappeared under the pavilion of the restaurant and into the hall, hastening toward the horror that awaited her. Gratitude drowned every other feeling. There had been two of them in that fated motor, and since one must be taken and the other left, a significant wave of thankfulness engulfed every current which, under other circumstances, would have stricken her terribly with grief.

At the end of the hallway a woman in a cap and apron, neat uniform of the *doucheuse* from the baths, came out, and, catching sight of the doctor behind Miss Desmond, hurried forward, claimed him, and, whispering, led him toward a yet further door.

Miss Desmond turned to Schermerhorn.

"Will you please go and telegraph to my sister, Lady Morges-Fair, for me? She is at Aix—the Splendide Hotel. Tell her that Molly is ill, ask her to come at once, but word it carefully."

"You don't want me here, then?" he urged. "You won't let me help you?"

"That will help me most of all."

Schermerhorn knew that Robert Bedford was behind that baize door, and that Miss Desmond wanted to go to him alone. He turned reluctantly away, and she went in. The room was a salon; it seemed to her full of people. There were, in reality, another doctor and Miss Struthers' *femme de chambre*, in tears.

The physician's sleeves were rolled up, his coat was off, a strong odor of iodiform filled the room; but Bedford stood there whole, safe and sound. He was saying to the doctor in French: "You will telephone, then, for R—— from Lausanne, won't you? Tell him to come at once—at once; he ought to get here in less than three hours. He must fetch two nurses."

With a few words to Miss Desmond of courage and sympathy, the physician took his leave.

Miss Desmond stared at Bedford with a look that traversed tears and stars to find him. Her eyes burned, sparks danced before them. The Englishman was ghastly white; under his eyes the rings were as blue as if abraded, and his hair fell in disorder over his forehead. She had never noticed that he had such thick, blond hair; his eyeglass was gone, and its absence gave him a boyish appearance; he seemed to her to be snatched from death. In his coat a flower he had taken that afternoon from her still hung torn and soiled. He wore a bright red cravat; it cut a vivid note in his dark, dust-covered costume. The color, as her eye caught it, made her shudder. Bedford had not spoken; he found it hard. Something of her thoughts was his as he looked at her; she forced herself to speak.

"What is it? Just what has happened to Molly?"

The Englishman, prepared for a

woman's outburst of horror and grief, found Miss Desmond's control almost a shock. He said, in a moved tone: "I cannot tell you. These men here won't say whether there is any hope or not. The doctor from Lausanne is a celebrated surgeon. He will know; but it seems just now that it is the very worst." He did not ask her: "Can you bear it?" He saw that she could.

"Molly wanted to go to Coppet and back before tea. I was mad enough to go with her—to let her go. Everything was all right until we were nearly back to Divonne; then there is a sharp turn, you know—a rise in the ground, a sort of lift in the roadway, and the bank goes down at the side something like seven or eight feet. She was speeding, and all of a sudden the diligence came around the corner, and to avoid it——" Bedford interrupted himself; he put his hand on her arm. "Come over here," he commanded, "and sit down."

She obeyed him, and he sat opposite her on the sofa.

"Molly turned out for the diligence, and the motor car skidded and rolled off the embankment. I was thrown out as we turned, clear of the machine into the grass, and Molly"—he hesitated—"Molly fell with the motor; it fell on her."

His eyes were fixed over his listener's head, and his face grew gray. Virginia Desmond's years of peace and serenity came, as it were, angels of strength to her and held her calm and still as if she understood the strain in the man's mind and his accusation of himself. She let him feel her sympathy and understanding. Her eyes filled with tears that did not fall, her face remained quiet and composed. Bedford felt the pulse of her control—he mentally leaned on her. He passed his hand over his forehead and his eyes.

"You are wonderful," he breathed, with relief—"wonderful!" He drew a hard breath. She did not give him any audible word of consolation. She rose, saying:

"I want to go at once to Molly."

He would have detained her, in pity for her, to spare her; but he saw that



she was of the stuff that endures well and helps others to endure. She grew paler as, side by side, they passed in, through the rooms between, to Molly's door; then she paused and said: "Go back, please, and don't think I shall be foolish or useless; and would you—rest?" She asked the question, lifting her eyes to his a moment in a quick look. "Yes," he said, "I will—try to—if you will send for me—soon."

Bedford but half obeyed her. He was absent for the time it took him to bathe, to dress—to discover that he had several ugly bruises that only now, when he had leisure to think, gave him pain. The sight of them made him angry. How unscathed he had been! What an arbitrary selection of fate to ruin a woman's life, and leave him unharmed!

He insisted upon seeing the Lausanne doctor himself, and then went back to the drawing room—restless, unnerved, eager for sight of Virginia and to be of use to her. It was probable that, like himself, she had fasted; and he rang, ordered a light supper, saw it daintily spread on a small table. He then arranged the lighting of the room, taking keen satisfaction in these unasked services.

The sinister ending of this day, the fact that in the next room lay a young creature despoiled of life's most acute delights, could not destroy the charm of Bedford's meditations. Whether or not Miss Desmond cared for him he had hitherto scarcely questioned. His mental handling of her was different to his manner of treating any other woman. But it had not needed an astute perception to observe her emotion when she met him that afternoon. He could scarcely let himself believe that he knew what it meant. Lady Morges-Fair and Miss Struthers, together with all the world and its blights, were to him secondary. The heart of life promised to reveal itself to Bedford, and he was set apart and immune to everything but his personal sensations.

Toward eleven o'clock Miss Desmond came out from the darkened room and the bedside of Miss Struthers. The brightness of the salon bewildered her.

Bedford sprang up at her entrance—came toward her.

"How is Molly?"

She threw herself down upon the sofa with an abandon that made her adorable in the man's eyes. She burst into tears.

"Don't," she said, "don't speak to me, please—it is too horrible!"

After a little she dried her eyes, and when she lifted her face again tears were still upon her lashes.

Bedford, who had never seen her composure disturbed, now recognized in her, as it were, another woman. He watched her with the excitement and tender interest a man feels as he discovers, little by little, new and unexpected qualities in the woman he loves.

It was not the first time that they were alone together, and yet it seemed to them both that it was the first. The seclusion of the room, the knowledge that the vast house was wrapped in slumber, that there was no one stirring but themselves in their rôle of watchers, the excitement of the day, their nearness to each other, drawn as they were together by a common anxiety, made them seem peculiarly near, and sharpened the feelings of the man.

"The doctors have not come back?" she asked. "They were to come at midnight. How long it seems!"

"It is nearly an hour to midnight, and there is no way of hurrying them in the least. She is not conscious?"

"They have promised to call me if she should stir."

He saw with gratification that she was glad to find him there. "I have scarcely left the room since you went." He wanted her to feel it. "I stayed on, thinking you might need something—be more tired than you realized. Schermerhorn went to Aix to fetch your sister."

"How kind of him!" she said, gratefully. "Indeed, everyone is devoted. You saw the Lausanne doctor yourself?"

"Yes; he inspired me with confidence. He says she will live."

She repudiated the vitality of the word.

"Live! There is not life in it! It's a



helpless waiting for death. She has no resources. Even if she could care for existence again, she has no tastes which a shut-in life could use."

Bedford murmured, compassionately: "Poor, poor little girl!"

Miss Desmond appealed to him. "What will she do?" as though he could suggest a plan for the invalid.

He made no reply. She had let him make her comfortable in the corner of the sofa. She half reclined. He deeply deplored her pallor and fatigue, and persuaded her to let him draw up the table; also to eat with him.

He urged: "I fasted till you came. I have not had a morsel since noon. I think I could eat something if you would, too. Won't you, please?"

She shook her head, but he ignored her unwillingness and cut a bird for her and put it on her plate, and poured out some wine. "Please, for my sake," and she tried to obey him.

Bedford, as he sat before her, sharing in the dead of night this sweet intimacy, felt a new sense of pleasure and delight. It was so agreeable to care for her, to watch her. Her presence inspired him always with the tranquillity of joy rather than the tempestuousness of passion. Despite the shock his nerves had received, he had never been so happy in his life.

Virginia's voice came to him as through a veil.

"My sister?" she said, softly. "Will she bear it? What shall I say to her? How shall I ever tell her?"

To this series of appeals—they were little more—Bedford was helplessly silent. He did not say at once: "Let that trouble you least of all! Lady Morges-Fair has let it—her child—trouble her least of all, hitherto!" A remembrance of an illness in the past, when Molly had the scarlet fever and Lady Morges-Fair had fled to Nice, flashed across him.

"She will be more calm than you realize," he assured Miss Desmond. "She bears this sort of thing wonderfully well, you know."

Miss Desmond stared at him.

"This sort of thing!" she echoed.

"I mean to say," he amended, "she is not hysterical. She will take it quietly. Forgive me," he added, as her eyes widened with dismay, "I do not mean to say your sister is utterly without feeling. She has a great deal of feeling, but"—he hesitated a moment, then gravely judged the absent lady—"not for her child."

"All the more reason," said Virginia, tenderly, "that Molly's situation should break our hearts."

But above the reply she made with her lips was the sudden realization that Bedford, so speaking, plainly evinced indifference to her sister. No man would speak so of the woman he loved. Thinking this, her eyes fixed upon him, her face was easy to read. Bedford could, without the aid of imagination, follow the transition of her thoughts from all subjects to himself. An illumination, a wonder and surprise lit her; she looked him frankly in the eyes, demanded of him something which her heart told her he answered without words.

He came and sat down beside her on the sofa. Never before had he been so close to her. His attitude was different—she felt it. Their relations had altered. For a moment everything else in the world swung away—slipped away—ceased to exist; there was only herself, with this tumult of feeling and emotion that made her heart beat fast, and all thought indistinct. She could not even be impressed by the horror that the next room inclosed; there were no other human beings in the world but Bedford and herself.

She felt a warmth like sunlight suffuse her. For the smallest part of a second her eyes met his. Her heart leaped, beat with a hundred pulses, then stood still. Unschooled in feeling, unused to sensations such as these, she put her hand to her heart as if to hold it still. Before she knew it, Bedford's hand had covered hers. Her lips parted. They leaned toward each other. Then in a second she had left him and was distant half way across the room. Neither had spoken. Bedford remained where he was, bent over a little, his hands between his knees. He heard her say in a voice

as cold as her expression had been its opposite a second before:

"You are very good to stay with me, but I think you should go and rest."

He looked up. "You won't make me leave you, will you? I couldn't think of resting, as you call it. But will you do me a favor? Try to sleep here—lie down on the sofa, and let me sit there by the table under the lamp, and read."

She obeyed him with no further persuasion on his part. She did not want to forget his presence, to leave him or to have him leave her; but she felt the need of concealing from him her feelings. Bedford spread a rug over her, and, taking up a book himself, sat down at a distance, prepared to sentinel the room, where the only sound was the muffled tick-tick of the traveling clock in its little leather case. When he thought that she had fallen asleep—for he did not read; never, indeed, turned the page—he ventured to extinguish the lamp on the table, and a distant jet from a sconce in the wall was the sole light. The outer blinds of the long window, giving on the balcony, had not been closed, and through the opening in the drawn curtain a long line of blue radiance cut the darkness.

It was full moonlight without; Bedford knew well how the serene splendor gained and spread over the sleeping loveliness of the valley and the lake. He could see it steal from peak to peak and hold all in its silver hands.

"I have come all this way," he mused, "along my life to find at this late moment that I have never really known what love was. Passion I have acknowledged and felt, and yielded to; but I have never dreamed what love was until now. Life is only a failure when one has come to the end without having been able at any period to claim the perfection of happiness. The perfection of happiness for me is comprised here. Whether I shall be able to make it mine, God knows! But I recognize it, and if I lose it I shall regret it to the end of my days."

Here Miss Desmond rose suddenly, and threw back the cover he had put over her.

"I can't sleep."

She got up, and, going over to the window, drew the curtain. The moonlight flooded her. She stood in it—a white, slender figure. The tranquil night she looked out upon was in peaceful contrast to herself. She was a new being, and as Bedford watched her standing there she seemed startlingly like her sister.

He remained seated, looking at the shadow that she made against the moonlight. It was as if he saw her in his sleep—that she was not a reality. Her presence had the mysterious charm of a dream, with the poignant delight that it was real. But when she turned full about and came slowly across the room to him, he no longer believed that he was awake.

She advanced slowly to his side and stood for a few seconds by his chair. Why he did not rise he could not have told, but he remained quite still, looking up at her. Then she sank, as might a snowdrift blown by a wind not to be withstood. She knelt down before him, and as, fascinated and magnetized, he leaned toward her, she encircled him with her arms. For a second, short as a breath, long as eternity, they held each other; their lips met. Then the woman gently withdrew herself, and as he sought, with a torrent of passionate words, shaken from his inmost self, to take her in his arms again, she resisted, saying in a voice he would never have known for hers, it was so vibrant with feeling:

"Go, now, please—at once—go!" She had sprung to her feet, and he could feel how tensely she was holding herself. Her eyes were darkened by the extraordinary storm which had swept from her convention and tradition—had broken down a wall of reserve strong as her ancestry.

"Go?" he cried.

She repeated:

"Yes, at once. If you don't, I shall never see you again."

But the man was far from being able to obey this capricious dismissal. At his appeal, his protest, above all at his touch, she seemed to melt before him under his

very eyes again as the snow, but as elusive and as light. She slipped from his hands, flew to the door, softly opened it, and disappeared.

But Bedford could not go from the room. Surprised, fascinated and bewitched by this transformation, he paced the floor, unwilling to leave the place still filled with her. After what was, in reality, a long lapse of time, he went out to the balcony, lighted a cigar, and stood there smoking, watching the sunrise and the coming of a new day upon this, the strangest experience of his life. The whistle of an engine broke the stillness. The Paris train had come in, and he knew that it was bringing Lady Morges-Fair to her daughter.

It was a lifetime, indeed, since he had left that woman's side. He believed, as does every human being under the influence of a new sentiment, that he was a new individual. The last passion is the only one, and a man really in love has no memories and no past. The fragrance of the morning air blew deliciously against his face. It seemed profanity to breathe it. An overwhelming gratitude possessed him that he should be alive and young enough still to enjoy, to care, to desire. With the sensation, sincere pity stirred, and a tender feeling for the bruised creature whom he had so cruelly forgotten.

"Poor Molly!" he said, almost aloud; "poor little thing!"

He turned and went back into the room, and was met by a murmur of voices. The door had been thrown open, and was blocked up by a porter in his bright green apron and a *femme de chambre*. These functionaries disappeared before his eyes, however; for behind them was a woman in traveling dress, the marks of fatigue and a sleepless night on her face. She gave a little cry at the sight of him, rushed forward, and half threw herself into his arms.

"My God!" she cried; "tell me, is it so? Is Molly disfigured for life?"

The last time he had spoken with her was in bitterness, when he had gone as near to brutality as a man can to a woman whom he thinks utterly false, utterly worthless; that time seemed dis-

tant, unimportant now. Why had he ever been angered with this wan, nervous woman, whose hands trembled on his arm, whose eyes were pathetic with horror and fear? He gently said:

"You must rest at once. Put madame's things there in the corner, and fetch a *dejeuner complet*," he ordered of the *femme de chambre*.

"Oh!" she murmured, "for Heaven's sake, don't speak of food. I had something at Bellegarde. I have never understood the idea of stuffing oneself because one is in trouble!" She pushed her hands through the fringe of hair which, in defiance of dye and curling iron, retained its supple and vigorous quality. But her personality could never again affect or appeal to Bedford.

"Well," she attacked him, irritably, "why don't you speak to me? What an icicle you are! If you had not closed your eyes all night——"

"I have not," he said.

She had sunk into a chair, and was unpinning her hat and drawing off her gloves. She looked up at him. "I didn't know you cared enough about anything in the world to sit up and watch all night."

"We are not going to discuss my callous brutalities now, are we?"

Lady Morges-Fair shuddered. "I simply cannot speak about this tragedy. I hate to suffer."

"I know you do."

"Well," she returned, sharply, "why shouldn't I? There's nothing of the Puritan in me, God knows! I never did care to torture myself. I never found any pleasure in making my nerves quiver. I consider it a proof of intelligence to escape all the unpleasantness you can."

"In this case," Bedford said, feelingly, "Miss Struthers must have been unpardonably stupid, for she is suffering a great deal."

Lady Morges-Fair had thrown her head back on the chair; her eyes were closed. "Mr. Schermerhorn met me at Bellegarde; he has told me everything, and I cannot conceive how four people could be in a motor that fell six feet, and only one out of the four be injured."

Bedford quoted: "*Four people!*" Schermerhorn had not told her, then, that Molly and he were alone. It was nice of Schermerhorn, but it thus left it for Bedford to break it to her now, and he felt an actual coward before the task. He was, however, spared the ordeal by the entrance of the physician who, in response to Mr. Schermerhorn's summons, had come in to see the mother of his patient. As Bedford, after having presented them, was about to leave them together, she tried to detain him; but, in spite of her beseeching and the horror on her face and her evident distrust of herself, he made a decided excuse that he was tired and must get a bath and breakfast, and left the room.

Lady Morges-Fair found herself alone with the horrible certainty, to face which Mr. Schermerhorn's telegram had fetched her from Aix. The doctor had taken his leave, after irrevocably marking out the future of her daughter, as far as skill could foresee. The mother, if physically exhausted, had no complaints to make of the workings of her clear and able mind. But she was in a measure unequal to the situation before her. Only familiar with sensations more or less vapid and more than less false, accustomed to avoid reflections that should render her actions repugnant to the eye of her conscience, she confessed herself at this time a little at a loss as to how she should accept the disaster. Tenderness for her child she had never known. Molly Struthers had been born into the ambitious and narrow life of a society woman devoted to her pleasures, to her conquests and to herself. The education of a child was an annoyance, and when later the daughter displayed both attraction and charm, she became positively an encumbrance in her mother's scheme of living. Many characteristics were highly developed in this emotional woman—the instinct of maternity had suffered. Now Lady Morges-Fair, in spite of herself, was uncomfortably touched for the sufferings of her child. She was at bay before her sympathies, and terrified, with a nervous dread at the morbid awfulness of the accident. She could not bear to think

of seeing it, or coming into touch and contact with the actual circumstances surrounding the maiming and injuring of human flesh. She impetuously wondered, as she walked nervously to and fro in the room, to whom she could turn for sympathy. Her eyes grew moist, and she was sorry Bedford was not within demand. She could easily weep, and she would have liked Bedford to see her genuinely moved. She wished Schermerhorn would come in. She almost wanted Lord Morges-Fair (at the time on a mission to Russia); for the first time, his wife found his absence inconvenient.

In default of masculine aid—for she always turned to the other sex—her mind flew to the existence of her sister. She had a sister in this house, and she had not taken the trouble to welcome her.

"Here I am left in this dismal room to bear my anxiety alone!" she exclaimed, half aloud. "Where can Virginia be?" She rang the bell, and when the *femme de chambre* of the hotel appeared, demanded that Miss Desmond should be fetched. The girl, who explained that mademoiselle had not left the room of Miss Struthers, was apparently reluctant to venture into the more distant quarters where so much misfortune was mysteriously concealed.

So Lady Morges-Fair herself started on the search of a human being, and went cautiously in through the next room. It was empty; trunks stood open, and a general air of disorder prevailed. Always timidly, she opened again another door, and found herself in what was apparently her sister's apartment. It was bright with the blaze of morning sun and fresh air. The bed was untouched, and the room deserted.

She went to the toilet table, and before the glass arranged the disorder of her hair. "My face," she murmured, "is full of holes; I look a perfect fright! It is a great mistake to appear before a man at such disadvantage." She glanced furtively toward the third door her pilgrimage had brought her to face. She was at last upon the tragedy! Her limbs grew weak, her heart beat violently. On

the table was a bottle of salts; she opened it and took a little whiff. Then she leaned on the dressing bureau, her head in a whirl.

"Where on earth can everybody be?" she repeated; and at this the door was gently pushed in, and her sister emerged out of the next room's shadow. Lady Morges-Fair stood where she was without moving, and held out one long, white hand.

Virginia, with a quick cry, low but full of sincere feeling, ran to her and threw her arms around her. Lady Morges-Fair needed support at the moment really very much indeed, and she clung to Virginia. The little embrace lasted but for a second, during which time the younger woman kissed Molly's mother, and thought of her as a very much afflicted creature; and then, in a trice, most subtly, came to her the realization that this was none other than Beatrice Morges-Fair, the woman whose sentimental career had reason to cause her such profound jealousy. Her arms dropped from their clasp; she withdrew a little, unconscious of the moved expression of her face. Lady Morges-Fair, nearly hysterical, said:

"*You're* not going to cry, are you? Do control yourself, Virginia! I think that if I can keep up, you and Bobby ought to be able to."

Miss Desmond murmured:

"How can you bear it, Beatrice? What *could* be more terrible?" She dared not go on. But her sister had wiped her eyes, blown her nose, and settled her features as near to their usual placidity as possible.

"I have seen Schermerhorn," she said, very tranquilly. "He has given me the bare facts only. Not his fault! I wouldn't let him tell me about it. I wish I were a week older and through the worst. I never have known how to bear sorrow, and certainly you will admit that this is a new kind and needs a new set of nerves. It was very kind of Schermerhorn to come to Aix," she went on; "he was most thoughtful and considerate, but"—she turned abruptly—"there were moments when I could scarcely be nice to him. I felt him such a butcher,

if you will let me use the word. How could he have smashed you all up in that way—or, rather, have smashed up one of you, and gotten three of you off scot-free?"

Miss Desmond stared. "Three of us off scot-free?"

"Yes," nodded her sister; "you are none of you hurt, are you?"

"No," slowly returned the other.

"I said something of the kind to him, but he looked so taken back for the moment that I spared him," said Lady Morges-Fair, placidly. "But I don't spare him later, I can promise you!"

It was on Miss Desmond's lips to say: "Mr. Schermerhorn was not in the motor; Molly and Bedford were alone together." But she quickly reflected that Beatrice had seen both men, and if not enlightened, it was neither her pleasure nor duty to tell the facts.

"How is Molly now?" asked the mother.

Her sister shook her head. "Conscious at intervals, but not really lucid. They keep her under hypodermics all the time. You see, she could not stand the pain otherwise. She calls for me whenever she is conscious, and I have not left her for a moment since midnight. I do not want to *harrow* you, Beatrice"—she impulsively put out her hands and took both her sister's—"but I cannot begin to tell you how terribly, terribly I feel. If I could only be in her place, I would." She stopped, her voice choking.

Lady Morges-Fair's eyes dilated, a sickly pallor came up over her face and turned to black under her brilliant eyes. Her pride, which had held her up in all the crises of a life in which people said sentiment and feeling were entirely absent, gave way. Miss Desmond's arm was clutched by a nervous hand whose tensely hurt her flesh.

"Oh, it is too awful to think of it—it makes me positively sick, Virginia! Why, the room reeks of it, and so do you. My poor Molly!" She shook her sister a little. "I cannot go in! I cannot! *C'est plus fort que moi!*"

Relieved at the human exhibition on her sister's part, Miss Desmond soothed her devotedly. "There is no need for

you to go in now. It would do no good; it would only excite her. You will not have to go until she calls for you."

"Oh!" gasped the mother, "I am so glad! Give me a little time; let me get used to it. She is hopelessly disfigured," she announced, with an abruptness which made her hearer start. "The Lausanne surgeon says she will be a cripple—a useless invalid, a disfigured, helpless creature as long as she lives."

Lady Morges-Fair said it *at*, rather than *to*, Miss Desmond. "What shall I do with her, in Heaven's name?"

At this novel view of the situation, the hands on Lady Morges-Fair's arm relaxed their hold. But Lady Morges-Fair had recovered her *aplomb*; she was past the burst of grief, and was become the scheming, diplomatic woman whose success had been historic in all tactics for years in London.

"I suppose I cannot hold Schermerhorn responsible," she continued, musing, "although I *do*, I can assure you. He is immensely rich, he is free, and it would only be a decent thing if he offered to marry Molly. He has spoiled her life and her chances."

Miss Desmond went to the window and shut out the breeze. She began to be sensible that it was cold. As she turned about, her face was swept by her sister's scrutinizing eyes, from which tears were dried.

"I had no idea you were so good-looking"—Lady Morges-Fair's voice was grudging—"or so young. How old are you? Thirty-three? You don't look a day over twenty-five."

Virginia's dressing gown was open at the throat. Her hair, disordered, fell in a soft luster around her neck and ears, and Lady Morges-Fair's face hardened as she looked.

"I have not understood as yet," the lady went on, "what these two men have been doing in your company. Is Schermerhorn in love with Molly?"

Virginia's blood mounted—mounted as though it were shot from her heart to her face. "No," she said, with difficulty, "I don't think he is."

"Then," her sister said, keenly, "he is in love with you."

"You have no right to say so!" Terrified under the scrutiny and the examination, Miss Desmond determined Beatrix should not read on her face or steal from her another's secret.

"Oh, you have answered me!" Lady Morges-Fair suggested, with something like disgust. Her sister's resemblance to herself, the greater beauty of the younger woman, was the cruellest thing she had been called upon to bear for many a day—indeed since she had seen her own complexion go back on her, and her youth slip away.

"You should have told me," she accused, "or Molly should have told me."

"Told you what?" The other voice was cold, and there was a little scorn in it—a little hint of a spirit not utterly tame or under the control of another.

"Why, that you are not a proper chap-eron."

Virginia drew a sharp breath. "You could not expect me to say *that*! To tell you *that*, or think it! And I do not think Molly feels it, either."

Miss Desmond, on whose physique the shock and grief—to say nothing of the crisis which her own life had reached—were beginning to tell, walked somewhat unsteadily over to the bed and half sank down on the foot of it.

"I cannot be expected," the mother went on, in a voice whose lowest tones made it the more impressive—"I cannot be expected to take this state of affairs very coolly. I put my daughter in your care, Virginia, and here are two men who have been in it as well. They have showered you with attentions, followed you all over Switzerland, now they are of your party—for some reason, I suppose; men don't waste their time for nothing, and I hold you responsible for whatever has occurred!"

A few weeks ago such a situation would have recalled the hawk pouncing upon the dove, or the lamb called to account by the wolf; but a transformation had taken place in the gentle Virginia. Although in her heart was a very sincere knowledge that she was responsible for much, still she had nothing to regret. The fact that she was so much to a certain man, while it complicated the con-



ditions of the situation, was the very thing that emancipated her. She had come suddenly into her kingdom, and she would not have been the woman she was if she had not shown her spirit. She also found her strength again; color came back to her cheeks, and her eyes—as beautiful as her sister's and fast growing as mysterious and as ardent—flashed upon the older woman.

"We do not know each other," she said, quietly; "we have not seen each other for twenty years. If we are ever to understand each other at all, there will have to be some confidence between us. You have not asked me for mine"—she waited a second, and it really was a lifetime—"I do not ask you for yours," and she said it very low.

Nothing could have surprised her sister more than these words from the gentle, dove-like Puritan. She did indeed know nothing of Virginia; she had imagined her a Priscilla, a straight-laced, stiff-necked woman of the purest morals and the most sterling character. All this indeed Virginia had been, but as she said these words she felt that perhaps not only had she not been understood, but that she had misapprehended herself, and that she was no different, no better than the woman in the chair before her, upon whose face the marks of a selfish, unfeeling life had left no ravages. They exchanged a look in which neither of them flinched. Then Virginia said: "Unless you forbid me to do so, I shall go back to Molly, or perhaps you will take my place."

Lady Morges-Fair got up from her chair. "No, no," she hurried, frightened; "that I cannot do as yet. I suppose you have a right to the position of nurse. Don't tire yourself to death. I shall go to my rooms and take a bath and rest. You have your maids with you?"

"We have one."

"Send her in every now and then to let me know how Molly is, and if I can do anything, of course you will see that I am called upon."

In a few moments more she had gone out through the rooms, and Virginia was left alone. As she watched Lady

Morges-Fair, she saw she was not quite so tall as she remembered; she was fuller, she was rounder, her figure more opulent or generous than her own. She had impressed in those few moments' conversation her strong personality upon the other, and over and over again came to her the assertion, as though some one said it: "This is the woman that Robert Bedford has loved, who has loved him, and to whom perhaps he still is bound." She was oppressed by her sister's existence. The magnetism seemed to have gone out of the air with her departure. The atmosphere, as she breathed it, heavy with the iodoform, made her sick. The very light in the room grew dead.

Beatrice, as she swept herself out of the room, had gone into the life of things and left Virginia behind in a tomb. Not six hours before, she had been in Bedford's arms. Not six hours before, for the first time in all her life, she had tasted of the greatest joy in the world. Up to this moment she had been able to feel his clasp and touch; now its warmth and strength left her. She had no regret, no shame for the abandon of herself; she had seen what was her right and been so daring as to claim it. The entire beauty of life had been her possession for a space infinitely short indeed. No one could rob her of that. But the future? She believed it was at that moment in the hands of a woman who would make of her own and of others' lives exactly what her selfish will determined. A consciousness of great fatigue and exhaustion pervaded her; the room grew dark. She groped her way to the bed, threw herself upon it, burying her head in the pillows. She did not faint, but she gave herself up to the complete lassitude that follows physical and mental strain.

No living woman who loves can be happy in a memory, while the future is uncertain or in doubtful question. Her desire is so far beyond that her power of gratitude for the crumbs of fate is inadequate. Her fears and doubts are so vigilant that joys she has captured lose their wings; she finds she has only taken them prisoner that they may know



grief. Nobody, indeed, could deprive Virginia of the memories of the past few hours, but she knew they would become to her a source of tantalizing misery, a pillow of thorns if they were the one on which she was to lie. Her niece, with her broken body, her wrecked life, her spoiled ambitions, had been consigned to her, and there was only this wreck left to drift alongside her ship.

Bedford reluctantly obeyed a summons from Lady Morges-Fair to breakfast with her. He thought, as he walked along the hall toward her apartments: "The thing one wants is pretty certain to come in the course of time, but by then it is likely to be the thing not wanted."

His note from her said: "You are to breakfast with me alone." She was in the habit of issuing her will in this dictatorial form, and he smiled to remember how often it had been too docilely obeyed. A few months since, he would have rejoiced at the mandate that now offered him a pleasure more than indifferent—one he would have gladly foregone.

She gave him a start—her resemblance did—as he came in and found her dressed with the careful taste of a woman who knows that every detail will be observed, and will tell for her advantage or disadvantage in the eye of a critical masculine. No man is more difficult to please than one whose affections are on the wane.

There was nothing in her wardrobe too alluring for the occasion presenting itself to Lady Morges-Fair, but as he came into her drawing room, one look at him, one remembrance of her sister's face as she had seen it off guard a few hours before, told her she had lost Robert Bedford. A wave of chagrin, a feeling of defeat more keen than any sentimental disaster she had hitherto known, came over her; she could hardly disguise it. She had not loved Bedford, but she had flattered herself she could keep him, recall him—and that he belonged to her. She was by far too clever to dwell on the facts of defeat, and in the twinkling of an eye renounced her

personal part in this game of sentiment. In another twinkling of an eye, she espoused a scheme which had sprung to her consideration during her trip from London to Switzerland. "If I find I have lost Bobby, I will play another game of cards."

"We are alone," she announced; "Virginia is completely done up! She has begged off, and gone to bed."

"I am glad she is resting." He shook his hostess' hand. "She was awfully brave yesterday, and awfully shocked."

The small room, although only occupied a few hours, had been improvised into a salon and was to serve as dining room; already in this short time it represented a woman to whom the surroundings of luxury are as indispensable as air. Lady Morges-Fair had a fashion of making the compartment of a traveling carriage look inhabited. Richly embroidered linen pillows filled the chairs and sofas, and on a little desk in the window there were a quantity of silver writing things, and in a vase or two fresh bunches of flowers had already been arranged with taste. Lady Morges-Fair gave Bedford her hand, it rested in his, then their touch mutually dissolved; not before she had contrived to make him feel a sense of friendliness, one might almost say a maternal sensation, and in a second he understood with relief their changed relations.

Not so quickly had he altered to her irrevocably and forever—as she had quickly accepted the situation. Far more tactful, far more equal to the circumstances than he, any astute reader of men and women's nature would have prophesied that in the campaign she was to be victor.

"You must have thought me (if you thought of me at all, Bobby) inhuman." A little smile trembled a moment at her lips. Around her eyes was a slight contraction, there came a little cloud over them, and she turned away but did not press her handkerchief to them. Bedford could have sworn they glistened. He had never seen her remotely moved, and he had never missed her tears, but the mood became her, it touched him.

"You can never imagine what I have

been through," she said, "and I do not want you to try. Sit down, they will bring in luncheon at once; it has not been hard to remember the things you like." She had seated herself at one end of the table, and he took the other. Leaning toward him, Lady Morges-Fair said: "I am not inhuman; I have a great deal more in me than you have ever seen or known, but I won't talk about it at luncheon. We will endeavor to forget there is anything so sad as Molly, if we can, and afterward I shall keep you all to myself for a little while—you will let me?"

"I am entirely at your service," he said, courteously; "that you know."

Lady Morges-Fair ate her luncheon, beginning delicately with the *hors d'œuvre*, and going deliberately and firmly through all the courses of an appetizing little breakfast. Her companion scarcely touched a morsel, but contrived to disguise his lack of appetite, and watched the lady. She talked to him in a subdued tone of voice, as though its very *timbre* were chosen by grief. Under the clever cover of suppressed emotion, she expanded all the charm she knew, and she had a wide and subtle knowledge. Her good looks were those of faultless feature and splendid eyes, a skin still fine, a handsome figure. She had reflected to herself that she had lost everything as far as this man was concerned, and she was going to play every card she held, in order to win out at the finish.

His sensation as he looked at her was that he faced a portrait of the woman he loved, and that it was very badly done. Lines he did not remember to have remarked before were, as he compared her face to her sister's, evident; her color somewhat vague and faded; it was a picture whose striking resemblance would give him pain, were Virginia to die; in that case, he could never look at Lady Morges-Fair again.

"You must be cold and perfectly done up," he said, taking refuge in practicalities. "You left Aix at dawn, of course, you poor thing."

She lifted her fine eyes to him as she rose from the table, and held out her

hand with a slight trembling of the lips.

"Come, Bobby, here by the window on this little sofa, and let me talk to you."

Bedford lifted her hand to his lips with a very, very faint ghost of a tribute to her. At his touch and his face, her manner changed, grew instantly serious and appropriating, a little autocratic as well.

"You are one of the men, Bobby, who impose themselves so upon women," she said, gravely. "You have so much the power of making us feel inferior and beneath you, and your playthings. It is very hard to venture to your plane and to approach you from my own point of view, but I must."

He smiled, quite ignorant of her intentions, and only at this time thinking of himself and their past. He was simple and direct, as men are in their relations with women. Underlying everything that he had been thinking or feeling since he had seen her last, was the burden of the fact that he must tell her that he had been alone in the motor with her daughter.

"My plane!" he echoed. "I have none, dear lady! Men have no plane. We are so much more children down to our old age than you ever are. We believe in women, utterly too, you know. We adore them, we worship them, and when we find that we cannot do either perhaps legitimately, we go on loving them. Our 'plane,' you know, is the one you give us; please be sure of that."

Lady Morges-Fair nodded rather maliciously and shrugged her shoulders. "Some one," she said, finely, "has given you a very elevated platform then, my dear, that makes me dizzy to stand by you, so please come down a little."

Bedford had lighted a cigar; he was smoking a moment, and then said, slowly: "You will remember that I stood by you (as you call it) on whatever plane you chose—Beatrice—until you found me"—he chose his words and looked quietly into her handsome eyes—"de trop. Oh! we are not going to return, even for a moment, to that past! Whatever you did was right; whatever

you thought was right; and I can at last thank you for it."

She put her hand out to him as he sat in front of her. As he did not take it, however, she let its evident extension toward him pass as a pretty gesture. "You never understood, you know," she said, petulantly. "You never really wanted to understand. You took umbrage, you made wrong deductions, you fought, and then you ran away like a boy who does not want to know the facts. You never really cared whether I cared or not. You were never in love with me, Bobby."

After a second, he said, deliberately: "No, I never really cared."

She seemed to breathe with actual relief. "Oh! I am glad!" she said. "And it is nice of you to be so frank, so honest. It makes everything I have to say easier."

"What things?" he wondered to himself. "What things?" He smiled, gently. In the eyes of Virginia last night he felt he had cleared himself of imputation of love for Lady Morges-Fair; he believed that Virginia read him clearly. Thinking of her, he slipped into the very net that this woman had spread for his unwary feet.

"We are talking wide of the mark," he said, seriously, "and now for the one important subject of all—Molly. Have you seen her? How is she?"

"Oh, I am not *forgetting* her," her mother replied. "I have sent for you, to talk about her."

"Of course you have," he said, quickly. "What can I do?"

His companion rose hastily from the sofa. She walked over to the window and stood a moment with her back to him, and then came toward him and leaned on the sofa, one hand on its back, while she talked.

"What can you do?" she repeated, with great impressiveness. "You don't ask me in all seriousness, do you? You don't really ask me? Why, you can do, you will do, I believe, the only thing that a man of honor could conceive of under the circumstances."

He gave a very imperceptible start; he put his cigar down on the little tray

on the table, thrust his hands in his pockets and stared at her.

"You will marry her, I believe, Robert. I cannot imagine that you will do anything else."

He drew back as though she had struck him, for the abruptness of the words, the tone of conviction and concentrated purpose, the bringing out into the light of her intent and determination, convinced him as completely of the power of her fiat as if the chains she held were forged by fate and she had suddenly clasped them upon him; they fell around him. He grew cold; he fixed his glass in his eye and stared at her without speaking. No words adequate to the situation came to his lips. She was a mother, whatever else she was, with a bruised and disfigured child. He had seen Molly; he had gathered her up and carried her in his arms a quarter of a mile to a little farmhouse. He knew her terrible condition, he could never forget what he had seen. He could not brutalize the woman who thus demanded the sacrifice of his life, however he meant to struggle against it. His unreadiness to take the breach and blurt out the refusal he believed he had a right to make served her purpose admirably; she went on:

"Of course I know that the one who has the best right to come to her rescue is Schermerhorn—really. It was his motor; she was his guest; but he is a stranger, and I have reason to believe that he cares nothing whatsoever for her. Of course he is rich; I know him to be chivalrous and generous; I suppose that I could make some kind of a plea to him that would not fall short; but, after all, you are the one to whom I would most naturally turn. What did you go to Caux for, Bobby? Answer me that question; it is all I shall ask you; answer me! Ah, you do not; you cannot; you are not used to lies and subterfuges; you are a poor actor! You went up there to see Molly; to make me jealous, no doubt; to fall in love with her, if you could do so. I am sure of it. You considered nothing but yourself, but your own anger and jealousy. Molly, as an unmarried woman, and her

reputation, you never once thought of. Oh! I do not stand up to be a model mother! I do not pose for any kind of a model, my dear friend—and perhaps you best of all will be able to wound me in the joint of my armor! But this is the crisis of my child's life, and I am going to do for her the best I can. You have compromised my daughter. You are too worldly not to know it, and too well-bred to retaliate that she has been compromised by me many times. No man such as you are has ever been in her own environment, and you had no right to her, less than any right after your attentions to me. Unless you intend to marry my daughter honorably, your presence in her *entourage* was disgraceful."

Lady Morges-Fair had not moved. With every word she said, her emotions grew stronger. She had never been so serious, so determined in her life, and she called to her aid a very considerable quantity of control. She had really no idea of what she was going to say; she had not imagined that she could influence this man in even so large a degree as she seemed to be doing. His silence, his set, rigid features, impressed her; he seemed to be absolutely in her power. Her power fascinated her.

At this point he put out his hand and said, in a hoarse voice: "Wait, stop," but she shook her head. "No, no, I don't want you to speak; I refuse to hear any excuses; I refuse to take up any other case but the one before me; and what is more to the purpose, I refuse to take upon myself the care of a girl invalidated for the rest of her life. With all the good of her life crushed out, she would be a burden even to the most fond and devoted mother."

"Yet," he exclaimed, desperately, "this is what you wish me to take upon myself."

"Yes," she said, emphatically, "I do. I hold you responsible for her reputation in Switzerland. Do not make me say it again."

"Yes," commanded Bedford, "say it out—say it all." His lips were white.

She said, gravely: "There is not much more to say—is there?"

He drew a long breath. "There is something more to say," he managed to get out, "and I should have told you before this. You have no right whatever to claim Schermerhorn's generosity as a refuge for your daughter. He had nothing whatsoever to do with the accident. I was alone with Molly in the motor; we were out alone together."

Lady Morges-Fair gave a little laugh, the most hysterical evidence of her state of feelings. "My heavens!" she exclaimed, "this is really too exquisite! You were the cause, then, the indirect cause, perhaps, of the accident? It was your fault as much as anything else? Why did you go with her, why did you let her take that risk?"

He was silent.

"And you have not had the grace, the honor, to offer this solution yourself?" she apostrophized him.

Bedford smiled ironically. "You have hardly given me time even to express regret or sympathy."

Lady Morges-Fair came around in front of the sofa and threw herself down in the corner; she had twisted her handkerchief in her hands to a rope. Her face turned, as she talked, from red to white, and from white to red again. He had never seen her so agitated, or so in earnest, about anything in her life; her eyes were the embodiment of will and magnetism.

"I do not really know," she emphasized, with a gesture of disdain, "I do not really think of anything more to say that would appeal to your honor."

"And on my part," he returned, at bay, tortured, suffering to the last degree, "I think you have no right to appeal to a man's honor like this." But his conscience ached, every one of her words seemed to claim over his reluctant justice, a right which he believed was hers.

"Very well, then," she said, coldly; "then I won't appeal to your honor; I leave it to the Middle Ages; I appeal to your pity, your heart, if you have any—Molly loves you!"

At this daring stroke Bedford actually laughed aloud; he could not help it; it

relieved his anger, his impotence and suffering.

"Oh, really!" he exclaimed, "that's unfair to Miss Struthers. I don't think that is necessary, really, to your cause."

"Oh!" she breathed, leaning forward, "how *brutal* you are! how cruel! It may not do any good to my 'cause,' as you call it, to tell you this secret thing, but it is true, however. Molly told it to me in London two months ago. She came and opened her heart to me, poor little thing! And, whether you believe me or not, it explains 'my conduct to you,' as you used to call it then."

She looked away from him. "That is why I gave you your *cong  *. I gave you up really because I would not hold you when I knew that she cared."

Bedford flushed to his hair. He stopped on his lips the expression "I don't believe you." He could not force it out. There was something in her voice, her manner above all, a hundred nothings difficult of explanation hitherto, that came as a revelation to him now; it was as if a tangle suddenly unraveled itself in his hand. He believed that perhaps what she said was true.

"You have made her care for you," said Lady Morges-Fair—her voice trembled. "You have destroyed her reputation, you——"

"Oh, hush!" said Bedford. "Hush!" he commanded.

The look in his eyes frightened her. She put her head down on the sofa and burst into tears; he did not hear her sobs, her grief left him utterly indifferent. He had been thrown suddenly out of brilliant, pulsing life into a dungeon. He could almost smell the odor of confinement; his chains were forged; he was stoned in by his captivity. He went over to the window and pulled aside the little lace curtain. Miles upon miles of plains and fields and valleys stretched before him; against the sky were outlined the distant summits of the Alps, soft, white, melting peaks that seemed to sink into the June sky. Directly on the terrace in front of him several little children in bright pink coats and short frocks were playing in a pretty group with a fox terrier. The light, sweet

tones of their voices rose to him. Life and future seemed to slip away before his eyes, as though all the slides in a lantern had been used. There was nothing before him but the dull square of glass. He dropped the curtain and turned back into the room, came over to Lady Morges-Fair, who still sat huddled in the sofa corner, her face hidden.

He said: "When Molly is able to hear and understand, will you ask her if she wants to see me? Meanwhile, I shall announce our engagement at once. It will be best, I think. I will marry her as soon as the ceremony can be performed."

Without uncovering her face, Lady Morges-Fair extended to him a limp white hand. He barely touched it, and let it fall, and went out of the room.

Toward evening, the house grew intolerable to Virginia Desmond. Bedford had neither written nor sought her. It hurt like a wound. Her short space of happiness was beginning to turn to misery. What the *t  te-  t  te* in Beatrice's salon had been she could not imagine, but a hundred doubts, a hundred fears, besieged the new citadel which had gone up in a night, and whose walls, beautiful as they were, could not be strong. She could not bear the seclusion of the house another moment. She put on her things and went out of the hotel by a side entrance, turning toward the deserted park and a long alley called L'Esp  rance. At the other end of it, under the trees, she could see the figure of a man walking slowly toward her. He was smoking, and as he caught sight of her he threw away his cigar and came eagerly forward. It was Schermerhorn.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "how pale you are!"

His solicitude and interest came like balm.

"You must be really ill. Won't you come for a little walk with me? It will do you a world of good. You've been under a most dreadful strain. My sister wanted to see you to-day, but I persuaded her to leave you alone. I supposed it was the kindest thing, after all."

She gratefully thanked him. He

took her for a brisk, short tramp along the road between wheat fields full and mellow on one side, on the other the somber shadows\*of the Jura Mountains. In his kind\*and thoughtful companionship, Miss Desmond relaxed. He was tender, but not sentimental, and she was grateful to him for his delicate avoidance of all personalities. The delicious air, the swift walk, during which they talked but little, refreshed her, and her spirits began to rise by the time they turned into the *Espérance* again. Schermerhorn said:

"It came to me as a great surprise about Bedford, though I suppose you knew it all the time."

She showed that she did not understand, and said, surprised: "Knew it—knew what? What was a surprise?"

"Why, his engagement to Miss Struthers."

She did not answer, and the noise in her head and ears became an ocean of confusion.

Schermerhorn went on: "You didn't know it?"

"Who told you?" she evaded.

He thought that she was feigning discretion, and said: "Oh, it's quite public now; you need not mind being frank with me, for Lady Morges-Fair told me herself—and that they were engaged in London before he came on. I suppose it was some idea of the mother's that it should not be announced. It is terribly hard lines on a man, though, isn't it? I really don't think they ought to marry, but he wouldn't have the heart to go back on her, of course—not that he wants to."

They were engaged in London! All this time, then, if it were true, she had been the dupe, the plaything; the audience to a game which she had not understood, one of a hideous part of audacity and lies, and feelings disguised and concealed. She had supposed him in love with her sister! that she had accepted! doing despite to her honor! And he had let her suppose it! Well, perhaps he was in love with her sister—in love with them both—in love with all three! A disgust swept over her, a loathing of herself, a shame that hurt like a physical

feeling, and a hatred of the man, poignant because it was so close to her love. In the first force of the shock, she could not reconstruct any personal remembrance of him with herself. She could not call up his face, or his eyes; and the fact that she had been in his arms, that her lips were his and she was still full of the sense of him, overcame her with a revolt so strong that she could have cried aloud.

Schermerhorn was going intensely on: "But do you know, after all, I am awfully glad—I guess you will understand why; and for the first time I could be cordial to Bedford, who in his way is an awfully nice sort. You see, I had a jealous idea that you cared for him."

"Oh, no, no, no!" she breathed, shrinkingly.

"Of course not," he hurried; "you must forgive me for thinking of it; but, you see, I shall never give up hope." His voice fell—and Miss Desmond impetuously turned toward him. What she would have done in the reaction of her wounded, agonized spirit, what she might have stooped to accept from this devotion coming at the point of her desertion and her misery, who could say? But just then another figure came swiftly toward them from the hotel into the *Espérance*—Bedford in evening clothes, without his hat, his tall, dark figure in the half light easily distinguishable. As they met, Miss Desmond extended her hand, and said with no visible embarrassment: "Mr. Schermerhorn has just told me that your engagement is announced. You must let me wish you"—(a potent vision of the stricken creature whose body was so scarred and broken came to her, and a vast pity, that in her beautiful nature took hand with a certain tenderness, overshadowed her love and her own grief—the word "*happiness*" she could not use—she changed it)—"I am so glad," she said, softly, "so glad for Molly."

She was still holding his hand, or, rather, *he* held hers and would not let it go. Through the mist that sprang to her eyes she scarcely saw his face at first, then it grew distinct. Pale—strained—she thought he besought—



implored—his head actually bent toward her, and the currents of Bedford's misery and love found her heart in a rush. It does not take more than one light to illumine the world to some natures—Miss Desmond understood. Schermerhorn saw only a prolonged handclasp. The Englishman's gravity was natural in a man whose sweetheart is at death's door.

"I have been telling Bedford," he said, cordially, "that I've seen people pull through the most awful accidents in a surprising manner. I had a chauffeur once who did not have a whole bone left in his body, and he is on the road as sound as a bell to-day."

Bedford had not spoken, once Miss Desmond's hand had been released. Now he forced himself to find a few words. "You are very kind," he said—"thanks." It was to both of them.

"Hadn't we better go in?" Schermerhorn suggested. "It is very damp here now, and Miss Desmond's warm after her walk."

She followed his bidding docilely. Thought of him as a person, an aid, a solution to any problem, had vanished at sight of Bedford. Whether he loved her or not, whether he was false to her or not, she was his forever; it was her fate, whether for misery or joy.

"I saw you could not wish him happiness," Schermerhorn said, intelligently. "Poor, poor chap, what an awful future, tied to an invalid's chair, and Miss Struthers is young. I cannot imagine a man like Bobby Bedford playing that rôle."

After leaving her, he went to the rose garden a little way down the road, and chose for her dozens upon dozens of Soleil d'Or and tea roses, and sent them with his card and a message more kind than his words had been. She found them in the salon; they made the room a bower, but they were to her, in spite of their beauty, as though they had never bloomed. Later, however, in the evening, as she sat alone, before going in to take her watch with her niece, the accumulated breath of so many roses found her senses at last; they were like unseen wings of tense sweetness, and

they carried her back to the rose time in her own garden, and although quite conscious of the desolation her home would be to her henceforth, she yearned for the safety and the refuge, as a tossed and shipwrecked voyager for the port of home. She put her arms down upon the table, her head upon them, and wept bitterly.

The expression of Bedford's face haunted her. She began, before her own suffering, to be conscious of his, and she wondered if his part were not the hardest of all. Given half a chance, a woman will obliterate herself in the man she loves, and the thought that he can suffer for her, while it is the dearest triumph, is at once too keen to endure. Woman's supreme, superb willingness to spare the beloved pain has been the secret of many of the *grandes passions*, the great sacrifices of the world.

Miss Desmond had not hitherto given her thoughts full permission to dwell on Bedford's love for her. Even his words, his embrace, had not impressed her with the entire conviction that he cared for her. Why had she gone to his arms? She knew only that as she had lain there on the divan that night in that silent room, a wave like the tidal of life had submerged her. She had risen and gone across the room to the window, and there stood trying for control and calm. Calm was as far from her as the peaks of the Alps from the heart of the lake. She had understood then that she loved this man above all else in heaven and earth, with the mature and single passion of a woman whose treasure has been given for once in the round, mature fullness of her womanhood. Love can never come more strongly. The fact that he was perhaps not free to tell her his love, her sister's sure advent on the following morning, all combined to make her believe that if thus caught swiftly to her heart, he was hers—else, perhaps, lost forever! Therefore, for the span of a few seconds, blinded by love, she had seized her destiny, made her own fate. Her action had never, to herself, asked or demanded apology; she was neither chagrined nor surprised during the hours of advancing dawn when she

watched alone the window of her room; but she lived and relived her short history of passion with a gratitude and ecstasy as deep as it was pure, and until Beatrice came, nothing entered her Eden to poison its beauty.

After her conversation with Schermerhorn and the meeting with her sister, she understood why Bedford had neither written nor sent. She comprehended that there had been no course open to this man but the one he had honorably taken. If he loved her even half so well as she loved him, the situation must be the perfection of grief as long as all three were alive in the same world.

Her instinct was to leave Divonne at once. She shrank from the daily facing of her sister, but in a dull, lifeless sequence several days passed, and she discovered she had little need to think of herself or plan for her actions. Beatrice had capable charge of everybody's plans, neglecting nothing but the nursing of her child. Bedford she never saw alone, and Schermerhorn, in response to a dispatch from New York, had left Divonne suddenly, without even a good-by to Miss Desmond; but a superb box of flowers from Paris and a devoted note from the ship had touched her, suffering as she was from another man's neglect. She could only guess at Bedford's state of mind, and that he smarted under his yoke. He looked exhausted, sick of life; he was silent when they were together in the company of Lady Morges-Fair and Mrs. Carstairs, and his lassitude and melancholy were notable and not strangely attributed to his anxiety for his betrothed. Put a man in a woman's power, and he becomes either a brute or a slave. Had Miss Struthers, with a pathos of an undeclared passion and a spoiled existence, not been in the case, it is certain that Bedford would have been more brute than captive. As it was, he tried manfully to keep at least the hate out of his face.

And if Virginia, with her undoubted loveliness and charming presence, had not been in the question, Lady Morges-Fair might even have pitied the man

whom she had so tyrannically possessed. As it was, she treated him with a debonair manner of appropriation. She used him, half caressed and half teased him; and he ignominiously wore the yoke she forged—like a pauper wed to a rich woman, like a young man who has chosen an old bride. Lady Morges-Fair had annexed him, and he was in a state of torpor after the conquest.

One evening they found themselves all three together on the balcony of the salon. The ladies in their light dresses were white figures in the darkness, for the night was obscure. Bedford was lost in the shadows, his cigar's end only betraying his presence.

Miss Desmond spoke. "Beatrice, Molly is so far out of danger now that I think I can be spared; I think I shall go home."

Below in the *grand salon*, an evening concert was in full swing. The doors were thrown wide open in the warm night, and the crying of the violins and the undertones of the 'cello came distinctly to them. Many of the *baigneuses* were out on the terrace. Here and there, little clouds of white, as they fluttered to and fro, revealed the evening dresses of the women, and a laugh mingled with the music which, a prelude for a song, grew soft and subdued as a Russian woman with a superb voice began to sing:

Ninon, Ninon, que fais-tu de la vie?

"Well," returned Lady Morges-Fair, "I cannot, of course, keep you forever, Virginia; but I assure you, now that you suggest going, you seem too precious to lose. When do you think to leave?"

Rose aujourd'hui, demain fletie, comment vis-tu?

"There is a steamer on Saturday. I have a letter from Mr. Wyatt; there are some things about the house I should like to arrange this year."

"The house!" Lady Morges-Fair exclaimed, in a sentimental tone. "I can see it. It is called 'The Pillars,' Bobby. There is a row of them, white, fluted, all

along the front. It has a sort of beauty, I suppose. They call it a perfect example of colonial architecture; but a colder, severer, more chastising effect than it presents I could not give you! I used to think those columns would come down and stalk out of the gate, and meet me, and suppress me in the dark! They are like ghosts." Her voice sounded thin and impressive in the darkness, with the music an accompaniment soft and alluring.

"You had imagination, then, when you were a child?" Bedford said. The subject interested him—not Lady Morges-Fair's childhood.

"Childhood?" she exclaimed, rather bitterly. "New England children of my day had none. I thank God, and my godmother, that I was picked up out of New England and transplanted. I grew up over here really, Bobby." She appealed for his listening interest.

"And Miss Desmond—she grew up, then, at 'The Pillars'?"

His agreeable manner of pronouncing the name and the tone of his voice as he spoke—directly to her, she felt—gave Miss Desmond a thrill of pleasure.

"With the chastisement and the ghostly columns around her? Poor little child! Were you," he boldly asked, "afraid, too? Perhaps you had no reason to be afraid?"

She waited a second, overcome by the personal directness of his address and the frankness of his interest. Then she said:

"No, I was not afraid. New England never suffocated me, as it did my sister. I suppose I am more the type. I did not feel the coldness, because no doubt I was cold, too; we were kindred temperaments."

"Yes," caught Lady Morges-Fair, "you were a little icicle always, Virginia."

"You see, I had my garden to satisfy me," continued Miss Desmond. "I began it when Beatrice went abroad. That year, I remember, I planted the row of sweet peas in March. There was not a flower in the grounds except some wild violets that grew near a tree trunk at the foot of a wall where I used to play;

I had a sort of feeling they would not satisfy me that spring, so I bought a package of sweet peas at the grocer's—Mr. Bailey's, on the Green, Beatrice—you remember Mr. Bailey?"

"Oh, yes," drawled Lady Morges-Fair, indifferently. "He used to wear a checked apron and he had no teeth. I can remember how fascinated I used to be in watching his lips slip over his gums."

Her sister went on as though she had not heard. "Well, I planted those sweet peas a few days after you sailed; they all came up pink and lavender, a row of them at the west corner of the house, and since—there have always been sweet peas there. My garden is like a fairy tale," she said, "full of charm and beauty, and such a marvel of color. I have added to it year by year—azaleas, carnations, lilies, but chiefest of all the roses, and now 'The Pillars' stands in a garden. It is a short season, you see, with us, but a brilliant one, and Denby is sheltered by a circle of little hills; it is not so bleak as most New England towns."

Bedford was silent as he followed the low, sweet intonation of the enchanting voice. She spoke more like an Englishwoman than an American, and her differences of idiom pleased him, rather than suggested any foreign element. He saw all she pictured, and what it meant and implied, the loneliness of the life, the instinctive turning to nature for response. She had made the desert blossom like a rose.

Lady Morges-Fair knew Bedford well, and that his mood was certainly not hers. She said, tartly: "I prefer my roses on Piccadilly, and I have never blamed Eve for getting out of the garden as soon as she could. Women were made for interior decoration," she laughed, "and I leave the sunbonnet and garden gloves and scissors to you."

Bedford interrupted quickly: "Miss Desmond, do you wear a sunbonnet and garden gloves, and go about with a basket on your arm cutting roses?"

"Yes," she admitted, "I do."

"Oh, come!" cried her sister, "don't sentimentalize over a handful of earth

and a few rose bushes! Let your garden grow, and stay here." She did not want her sister, but she wished her going to be of her own free will. "The doctor says I may safely run up to London next week for a few days, and you know I could not leave Molly unless you were here."

"I shall sail on Saturday," Miss Desmond decided. Lady Morges-Fair smiled in the dark. She drew her boa up around her throat with a sense of *bien être*, a sense of complete victory. She understood that Virginia did not say things for effect, that she meant what she said, that she would go, and it completed her conquest.

At that moment Mrs. Carstairs' little blond head appeared at the balcony door. She cried: "Are you there, Lady Morges?" (For reasons of her own she abbreviated the Englishwoman's name.) "Oh, *do* be an angel, and take my hand at bridge for a quarter of an hour! I've just got a cable from my brother, and I must answer it, and it will take me some time to look up the papers he wants."

Lady Morges-Fair responded agreeably, and rose and followed the little American out into the salon, and left Miss Desmond and Bedford alone. Her empty chair was between them. As Bedford sat smoking, listening to the music, the light from the salon fell on his face, and Miss Desmond saw how very pale and grave he was. The first few seconds of their unexpected companionship passed in unbroken silence. Bedford, except in the ordinary interchange of commonplaces, had not spoken directly to Miss Desmond since he had told her that he loved her, and it seemed now to her, as he spoke across the darkness, that he broke the silence of the grave. It was a sort of resurrection.

"You are not serious when you speak of going on Saturday?"

"Quite." She was completely in the shadow; he could not see her. He felt that the woman who had left them alone against her inclination might at a caprice return, and that he only had a few precious moments.

"I have no right to ask you—no right

to ask you for anything, even the littlest favor," he said, very low; then waited, as though he hoped she might deny his humility. She said nothing. "If it is anything to you to know that, when you do go, you will take the very air and breath of the place with you, please believe it."

He came over and took Lady Morges-Fair's chair and leaned across to Miss Desmond. "What a miserable coward you must think me! You have every right to think so—but I should have been more dastard in any other position. I did not intend any word of it all should cross my lips, but to-night, when you spoke of going to America, I felt as though you were shutting the doors of a tomb upon me—and naturally I plead for life! Try to forget my selfishness," he said—"be merciful, be pitiful."

Her hands lay together in her lap; he put one of his over them—they were cold; he bent and lifted them thirstily to his lips.

Bedford's characteristics were reserve and indifference. His slow wooing of Miss Desmond, if it could be called love-making at all, was in keeping with his indolent, procrastinating temperament. Now the contrast was great; his voice, low as it was, rang through the woman—she trembled.

"There were many things I wanted to say to you that night when you left me so quickly," he went on. "No man is worthy the love of a good woman—I think we all feel it. Some of us are worse and some of us are better. I do not make excuses for myself; and I should never want you to know all my life, perhaps. I have always thought that it is not so much mutual knowledge of everything that is past in people's lives, as it is mutual confidence and mutual understanding, and, above all, love. However, you seem to me so good, so wonderful, so different to any woman I have ever known, that if I could have wiped out every experience of my life and have come to you as you have come to me, I dare say I would have done so. That, of course, is impossible; I am what I am. I am forty years old; I have liked to live and I have. But there is

just one thing I want to say. I would have told it to you that night; your eyes asked me a question which I did not answer with my lips. What must you have thought of me, what a spectacle of a man you must have found me, if you believed, if you thought for a moment——" He stopped.

Miss Desmond interrupted him in a whisper. "Please don't excuse yourself to me. I feel as you do. I don't care to know, I don't need to know."

He again bent his lips to her hands, and said: "But I want you to know this—your sister and I were friends; I thought I loved her—I have told her so in the past many times; I have suffered more than I needed; but we have never been anything more than friends. If I had not left London as I did, I could not have said this. I was angry with her, and I severed what would have been another relation, before any definite bonds were formed. I tell you this because I am to marry her daughter, and I want you to know."

Miss Desmond breathed: "I did know, I felt it, I was sure; but go back, please, to where you were; I hear Beatrice—she is coming."

Lady Morges-Fair was indeed returning. Mrs. Carstairs with her, they were coming slowly along toward the balcony; the bridge party had been renounced, and they stood together talking, close to the window. Bedford leaned against the railing, and Miss Desmond said in an undertone which he alone could hear:

"I will stay, I promise you."

Bedford's rooms, according to his wish, were apart from the hotel proper, in a long, yellow house with pale green blinds. The two-story structure, mellow with age, nestled under an overhanging roof whose lines, soft with moss and caressed into round smoothness by time, seemed to partake of the character of the flowers that covered it.

A rose vine blotted against the stucco of the walls; in the lucent green of the leaves, tea roses and Soleil d'Or made spots of warm color. In a pamphlet, consecrated to the history of the department of Ain (a handful of printed mat-

ter written in the year 1830 in the shape of a eulogy of a new *Etablissement des Bains*—then very modish) he had come upon this little verse; it pleased him:

Rose of Divonne—how fair it is!  
Golden-leaved, crimson-leaved, snow white  
in the sun,  
Warm as the lips of love, sweet as love's  
kiss—Rose of Divonne,  
How can I hold fast what I have won?

Here the writer, having cited enough of the roundel for his use, left it cruelly at this point, and the page ended with a quaint engraving of miniature ladies in the costume of 1830, disporting in crinolines before this selfsame *auberge*—then new, and representing the latest fashion of watering places.

Its present inhabitant, very modern, very much of the twentieth century, would have been glad had the poet gone on to tell him how he might "hold fast what he had won"—hold it in the face of fatality.

On this evening he escaped from the society of Lady Morges-Fair and Miss Desmond, whose presence, since he could have so little of her, caused him to suffer, and after a turn or two in the deserted parks went to his own room.

The little house was separated from the *Etablissement* by the course of the river, and a rustic bridge gave access from one part of the hotel grounds to the other. On this bridge, and the torrent that dashed and settled beneath it, Bedford's windows opened.

A fleecy mist rose above the water, called forth from the intense coldness of the river by the heat of the June night. The vapor stole into the leafage of the banks and lay ghostlike along the shores, and in the veil the frail structure of the bridge appeared at times to be lost, and then again to swing with no visible support but air.

A week had gone by since the automobile accident. During this period Bedford had existed much as a criminal condemned to certain death, and too proud to show squeamishness to the eyes of the world. He was in a degree of fury—yet impotent; acknowledging his powerlessness before circumstance. He

refused, however, to give misfortune the satisfaction of seeing him wince. Although courtesy itself to Lady Morges-Fair, he had retired into a reserve of manner which her most brilliant attacks could not disturb. This past week had given him chiefly into her society. His sentiments toward her were so altered that he dared not define them. He despised her. She was his executioner, nevertheless he was obliged to admire her strength of character and her daring *coups*. In the opinion of the very observant little world of the hotel, he was only a composed and silent Englishman, much shaken by the terrible tragedy. He suffered cruelly indeed, and if Virginia had not been at Divonne, he would have escaped to London, but he could not bring himself to leave the place where she was.

A characteristic procrastination, a shrinking reluctance to acknowledge the finality of their positions, kept him silent toward Virginia.

From the moment he had been persuaded that Molly Struthers cared for him and had realized the reasonableness of Lady Morges-Fair's implications regarding his relations with her daughter, he had considered his honor engaged—had not hesitated to assume the responsibility thus imposed. But his heretofore weakness had been terribly rewarded! His delay in telling Virginia that he loved her had met its fate. Before he could claim her, he had lost her forever!

Twelve had rung out from the village tower, a loud, clear-toned bell that clanged so many changes on quarter and half and hour that it was as if the clock could not let time go, could not reconcile itself to knell the hours into irrevocable past. Bedford was in sympathy with the musical clinging to the present. He had no desire to form part of his own future.

His face, as he stood in his window looking at the wraiths of mist, was as gray and colorless as they. The house opposite had faded into utter darkness. Every light had been extinguished, the few park lamps, in tribute to national economy, had burned their quota of oil

and gone out. The night was obscure and heavy, the wings of the air, freighted with the odors of sun-warmed fields and roses, were motionless, and there was nothing to disturb Bedford's reverie but the loud noise of the stream. The one spark of happiness he had seen of late was in the fact that Virginia had yielded to his request to stay on. It had proved that she was not indifferent to him. To be reassured that she cared still, little as he had a right to such knowledge, selfish as such a wish on his part was, was nevertheless his absorbing desire. He recalled with passionate regret the freedom of the days at Caux. Fool! He had held happiness in his hand and let it slip through his fingers.

"If I am reaping the tares of my past follies, it's a heavy harvest," he murmured, "and I think a little too full a measure for the case."

As he so mused, he could have sworn that he saw a shadow pass over the bridge and disappear into the darkness of the shores. The river and his reverie had cast a spell over him. He stirred to break it, and—for his room was dark—he turned up the lights. As he did so, his door was noiselessly pushed in, and a woman entered—a dark figure in a long, enveloping cloak; on her head a lace scarf fell over her forehead, concealing her features, only her hands were white and dazzling as she threw back her coat and unwound her disguising scarf.

It was Miss Desmond. For an instant only he was motionless—speechless, with emotion and surprise. Then he cried: "Virginia!" in a voice whose gladness made the blood rush to her face. It was the first time he had called her by her name, and even in this moment of excitement she remarked it.

"You are surprised," she said, in a low voice, "but not as much as I am myself. When you know why I am here you will forgive me for coming."

He advanced to her. He could not speak nor greet her. He could only repeat her name, as if it must say all for him: "Virginia! Virginia!"

By the hands he had taken she pushed him gently from her. Her gray eyes



were humid, the pupils seemed to expand into the iris that shone like stars. "You are glad—I believe it!"

But her smile as she spoke was so devoid of any gladness that in his bewilderment he thought instinctively of death. Miss Struthers was dead, and Miss Desmond had come to tell him so.

She went on: "But you must understand my being here, and that I have only an instant to stay. I have come to tell you that I am not able to keep my word with you. I am going to America to-morrow; my train leaves at six o'clock. I suppose I might have written, but it would have been hard to explain in a letter, and that was not the real reason—I felt as though I could not go without seeing you again."

Her cloak, dark and enveloping, hung from her shoulders; the black lace scarf was in her hands. Very gently, but with a possessiveness that made her thrill, Bedford lifted the cloak from her shoulders. He threw it on a chair, and took the scarf from her hand. She still wore the white muslin dress of the evening that had so far slipped into the night. He took in even at this moment the charming simplicity with which she wore her clothes, the distinction she imparted to even a ruffle of lace. Above the soft folds of her collar, her face seemed to him to come out like a flower.

"I cannot take in what you say very well," he murmured, softly. "I shall not let myself believe it. The fact that you are here and near me; that there is for a second no one who can take you from me, no one to deny me the joy of looking at you, that we can speak together alone, makes everything else unreal."

He did not offer to touch her; he was far too sensitive to her feelings not to keep himself in perfect control. She walked slowly past him to a chair and sat down. Bedford seated himself near her. "It seems," he said, "a thousand years since I parted from you, and yet it is only a week ago. Why did I let you go from me then—why? You can never know how I have blamed myself for not telling you long ago that I love you. You can never know what I am

going through just now; if you did, you would pity me." He smiled a little. "I cannot say I have ever wanted to be pitied in my life. It certainly is not an Englishman's temperament, but from you," he said, "I think I could bear even that."

She did not answer, and he was not so blind as not to see what to every man is the most dear and grateful thing in the world—how her eyes rested on him with frank and charming expression of her tenderness. If it was pity, it was a very warm and lovely exhibition of it.

"Why do you speak of going away?" he said, abruptly. "What has changed you so suddenly? You cannot really mean to go."

Miss Desmond drew a quick little breath. "I would rather you didn't ask me," she said, hesitatingly, "but I am going, that is the chief thing, and no other reason but that I want to bid you good-by would have brought me here."

"Tell me what your reason is; I want to know."

Perhaps she felt that her moments were too precious to be wasted in a useless encounter with a man whose slightest wish she would always be more than willing to obey, for she made a little gesture as though she ceded to him against her will, and said:

"If you will know, in spite of me, my sister has said things which I cannot forgive; I never wish to see her again."

He showed the relief he felt. "Oh! is that all?—a woman's quarrel! Tell me what things they were." He leaned forward to her persuasively. "If you knew her as well as I do——!" But he cut these words short. Miss Desmond's eyes darkened, her lips tightened, and he hurried: "I mean to say that you are tired out, you are overstrained with care and sleepless nights; I am sure you have taken some utterly meaningless thing amiss."

"Oh! a meaningless thing?"

"Tell me," he persuaded. "I will make it seem nothing at all: it will take its right place, a trivial one, when you tell me."

She sat deep in the chair, a little, old red velvet chair once part of the pos-

sessions of a château, and which now, having found its fate in a hotel room, gave an air of distinction to the commonplace apartment. Back of her was her cloak, and against it her head sank, blond and charming. Her hands rested on the arms of the *bergère*, back from her forearm and elbow fell the lace ruffles of her dress. She felt no timidity in being here alone in Bedford's room at an hour more than unconventional. She felt strangely on the contrary at home and more nearly happy than in all the weary days when side by side with duty, hand in hand with renunciation, her spirit had refused to be comforted with goodness, and she had found the consolation of the just to be husks.

"Do not, please, ask me," she said, gravely, "to tell you what Beatrice said. I could not frame her words."

He possessed himself of her hand and lifted it once to his lips, then let it go. He said, beseechingly: "Stay—stay! Don't you care enough for me to endure her bitterness? I know how selfish it is, how more than selfish, how wrong, to want you here, but I cannot go on without the sight of you. Virginia! Let me have the poor joy it is, and the pain it is, to see you. Stay—dearest."

He felt the slight pressure of her hand on his. "You make it hard for me," she said, tenderly; "you make it impossible to leave you, and I shall have to tell you, because it will show you the only things I would not be willing to bear for your sake." She flushed crimson as she got out with difficulty: "Beatrice said that nobody would consider you bound to be faithful to your wife after you were married. Under the circumstances, your life was legitimately your own. She saw you cared for me, and if I would give her my word to do nothing to break the engagement she would give me hers to leave us thereafter free."

Bedford could see that every word hurt a delicate and sensitive nature like a wound. As she finished she snatched her hand away from him. He could instinctively feel that her inclination was to cover her crimsoning face, but she did not—she gave him the full sight of its touched, moved shame; he saw how

virgin she was, how unspoiled! Her attitude as she sat forward toward him was sincerely appealing to him. "I should have gone," she went on, agitatedly, "I should have done so, of course, without ever letting you dream or imagine this."

His face had grown hard with disgust and anger. He could not trust himself to speak, for he would not have spared Lady Morges-Fair. After a little he acknowledged: "You are right. I wish you to go, and at once. It is the only thing to do."

She looked at him quickly with relief. "I knew you would feel so," she said.

"Can you forgive me?" he asked. "To think that I should have made you bear this insult!"

She smiled, although tears sprang to her eyes. "Oh!" she breathed, "how little you know what you are to me! Why, you are all I have known of love. I shall bless you in the long loneliness, in my solitary days. You have been everything to me, all my joy and all my sorrow."

As she saw his moved face and how it changed under the influence of his feelings, losing all its calm, she knew how much he cared, but even in that moment she was glad that he offered no solution to their situation; she would have loved him less had he done so. He caught his breath and whispered: "I love you—you know it, don't you? I love you above anything in the world."

"Yes," she replied, "I know it or I should die."

Exaggeration was so apart from her character that her words had a solemnity to him. He believed her, and he bowed his head over her hand. She put her other hand on his bended head, and he felt it lie there like a flower; and as he was, thus, between her hands, a serene and sweet peace stole to him, as though from her heart to his the current went. The purity and beauty of this woman's life, her innocence and her goodness, seemed to bless him then, and something more overwhelming than passion stirred through him.

It is safe to say that he could never want her more than at this time, but he

could as easily have rifled a temple of its Madonna as to have rudely broken her peace. He realized how far her love for him had already carried her, how utterly it had beaten down the control of her life, how she had cast tradition like broken idols to the ground, and lit ascetic morality with a very flame. He saw; nevertheless, he believed that a greater gift than the tenderness and consolation which she brought him in her white hands was not in her mind to give. He thought he understood her, and he worshiped her. He lifted his face; it was white as death. "I curse my fate," he said, bitterly.

She started, as though he had brought her back from a very spell. "No, no," she murmured, "don't say that! It has brought me to you." She rose, and he as well. She saw he suffered, and moved toward him. Her courage grew for them both. "Don't, don't!" she whispered. "Oh! don't look at me like that, or I shan't be able to go. I have not told you that I understand everything you have done," she hurried, tenderly; "that, if possible, your generosity and the sacrifice you are making make me love you more."

"Oh!" he interrupted her, irritated beyond his power to control. "Oh!" he cried, passionately—"my sacrifice! Puritan! You glory in renunciation, it is a sort of ecstasy, I dare say, a sort of spiritual apotheosis; you cannot *fathom* what the freedom of love is because of your traditions that make you afraid of it!" His voice broke. Virginia clasped her hands as if she wrung them, and her voice deepened with the very quality which he said she feared.

"Oh!" she cried, "how cruel of you to speak like that to me! My very ancestors would cry out against me, they would stone me for what I have become for you!" She threw her arms wide with a gesture of abandon that was superb. She changed under his eyes from spirit to flesh. She looked like her sister; she lost her individuality, and became like all the world of women who love, and who, for passion, forget everything else in the world.

"Wasn't it I who went to you that

night when we were alone? I have never had a pang of remorse, and I ought to have died with shame. The breaking of the bonds of training—the denial of her heritage—has made Beatrice what she is; it is the swing of the pendulum to the extreme, the revolt against unctual restraint; and for me it is the desire for life, the need to be loved, the wonder of loving, that has come like a storm—the ruin of the old laws is shaken to its foundations."

He gazed at her, fascinated, bewildered; in her ascetic purity she had been the ideal wife, and in her abandon she was the ideal mistress. A passionate fear of losing her, a dread that any other should seize this superabundant happiness, struck him like a blow, and through his mind flashed the words of the song: "How shall I hold fast to what I have won?" He whispered: "Virginia! Virginia!" and came toward her; but she held him with her wonderful eyes.

"I am here now," she said, "alone with you like this, and you reproach me for my coldness and my scruples! I want to tell you, I want you to know, that I have dared to come because I trust *you*, not myself, and I could not go into my exile without seeing you again." She burst into tears. He took her in his arms, and she wept against his breast.

What he said to her, what he plead and besought, neither of them ever could quite recall. Whether it were the natural human desire to claim, in the face of fate, their legitimate happiness—whether, since defrauded of each other by law, they had not a right to each other still—whether, indeed, he asked her anything, or whether his passion and grief at losing her spoke in other than broken words and caresses, Bedford never really knew. In the distance, above the noise of the stream, the church bell rang out one o'clock—a handful of broken sounds, then the loud clang of the hour. This time it was a prelude of notes, and the hour was distinctly set free. Again, according to national economy, every light in the establishment went out; unnoticed by Bedford and Miss Desmond, the electricity had faded until it was no more than a fine,

blue thread, then it disappeared into utter darkness.

"Let me go, Robert." But as he still held her, she lifted her lips to his, kissed him once, and fairly tore herself from his arms. By magic, she found the door and the knob; she turned it, and escaped into the blankness of the hall.

Bedford could not follow her, he could not call, he could only go to his window and throw the shutters wide in order to see the river and the slender bridge. The mist had dispersed, and the slight structure vaguely defined itself over the rushing stream. Over the bridge, he distinctly saw Virginia pass, for her dress was white, and on his chair lay her mantle and the lace scarf, forgotten. He took them, gathered them in his arms and buried his face in them.

She will remember to her death the August night of her return to Denby Corners.

In the stale sultriness of the air, windless and dense, every sound was audible with heavy distinctness. The shriek of the departing engine, the creak of the leaving train, the slow nasals of the officials in the tiny, squat station, the sudden blare of a brass band. She stupidly thought, for a dazed second, that Denby had turned out to welcome her.

A manservant, an old creature devoted to the Desmond household, startled her by his age and his familiar greeting. He looked a thousand years old—and, what was more odd, appeared to know her well! The long voyage across land and sea, alone with her thoughts for companions, had made her feel practically a stranger in the world; and when this white-haired man met her with an affection at once humble and familiar, it touched her.

"Miss Virginia, I begun to guess you were never coming home." (Home!)

She had blotted herself back among the cushions of the victoria—for it was late, past nine o'clock—and hoped, in the muggy, dark evening, her arrival would pass unnoticed.

The streets were full of a happy sum-

mer crowd. Barnum & Bailey's were in town. That was the explanation of the distant band. Although the Desmond carriage had not been "uptown" for months, its reappearance was scarcely remarked in the excitement of the circus.

The victoria passed along the road leading to "The Pillars"; the dust, hub-high, rose in warm little puffs around the wheels; the animals sweated in their leathers. Far up the hillside, now and again, a light flickered out through the trees—the first sight "The Pillars" gave of itself. Its windows were bright for her.

Until the turn had been made, and ascent of the hill that divided the Desmonds' property from the town slowly begun, she had felt the links of her past and herself still part of the outer world. The very smell of Divonne and its roses was in her nostrils, the sound of its musical maddened stream in her ears. But as the carriage mounted the incline, as the pine grove sent its pungent odor irresistibly through the hot night, New England thrilled her with its own personality. It claimed its right, its imperious possession of this daughter. Even in the torrid August heat, Miss Desmond turned cold, tears sprang to her eyes and fell over her cheeks like rain.

The servant, turning on his seat beside the coachman, asked her:

"Ben right well, Miss V'ginia?"

"Yes, Phineas."

"Leave Miss Beatrice well?"

"Yes."

He asked nothing further, forbearing, in the presence of a new coachman who had no privileges of sympathy in the family, to speak of Miss Struthers.

As they drove to the door, she looked up to see the line of ghostly pillars flanking white and tall along the house front; with a flash, she remembered her sister's description of the place that night on the balcony at Divonne. Gloomy and severely chaste they were, indeed—great, white specters in the dark. "The Pillars"! Ah! they might well oppress her—a passionate, rebellious daughter of a race whose creed is control and renunciation! The house might well reproach

her for folly, and abandon her, as, unrepentant and desirous, she returned with her despoiled life to the home of her ancestors.

Miss Desmond was ill for three months. She gave up to her grief, and it devoured her.

It was well on in October when, for the first time, she came downstairs, and found in the charming rooms, full of sunlight and ablaze with the last glories of her garden, a kind of gentle solace. She was exhausted with suffering. She could not, for the time, suffer any more. The flame had burned out. She was ready to rest.

In the following weeks, as she slowly regained her usual health, she planned for her future. Looking at her listless hands and her face, thin and tragic, she took fright at the prospect of a future passed with such a sad companion, and readjusted herself to meet whatever number of years was to be her portion, since she was evidently to live. In a short time she was in her garden; a basket on her arm, scissors in her hands; a slender figure in a dark gown, a long fur stole about her shoulders, bareheaded, the autumn sunlight in her hair. Accompanied by her gardener, she went her careful ways, directing for the grafting of trees, planning for potting and covering her plants, retrieving ravages her long absence had permitted.

Not twelve miles from Denby is a factory town of fifty thousand inhabitants, and to what it offered of work to the philanthropist and humanitarian Miss Desmond took her gentle ministrations.

She discovered, as she undertook her duties, that in six months she had become another woman. Before suffering and evil, that until now she had pitied from a distance and been as timidly near blaming as her lovely nature would permit—before cases of immorality and sin—she found herself a tender, comprehending comforter. A certain poor creature (whom she might well feel she had reclaimed) clung to her, and said, kissing her pure hands:

"Oh, Miss Desmond! You *ain't* like

a charity teacher, nor a preacher! You're different, somehow. Your goodness don't *hurt*—you seem to understand."

It was her greatest happiness to relive her companionship with Bedford. She found that her mind was inoculated by him, her mentality had received the masculine stimulus. Her experience was too limited—too short, perhaps—to last her all her life; but for the present she nourished herself with memories that were still vivid and vitalized. She believed she could never grow narrow now, never could wither and fade. Existence had received the stamp of Bedford's personality, and he had kindled a fire in her which would light her to her grave.

But she discovered soon she must not live with her past alone. It might remain the bed, the undercurrent, but she must leave its surface untroubled. Only in this way would the actual objects of life mirror themselves; otherwise, all was turbulence and distraction, and distorted shapes.

She read and wrote; she passed through Denby a serene and beautiful lady, grave and gracious. In L—— her work was carried on with a calm and steady reasonableness, an unflagging interest. Her fortune, large enough to enable her to live well, did not admit of wide beneficence and costly enterprise. Her establishment at "The Pillars" was simple; she kept her expenses at the lowest limit possible with the course of life she believed every well-born woman should lead. She dressed always as though Bedford might come and so find her. The idea of taking a companion she dismissed at once. Feminine standards she had no desire to live with. If daily contact with the mind of a man were denied her, she preferred her books and flowers and outside interests. Several times she went to Boston on a visit to friends, once or twice to New York, always returning to "The Pillars" with a sense of relief.

In a holiday season, when her house was at its beautifullest, fragrant with mignonette, lilies and violets, the mistress of "The Pillars" was surprised by a visit from Mrs. Carstairs and Scher-

merhorn. The sight of them gave her a shock like a physical pain. Distinctly all the past came back to her; behind Schermerhorn she fancied she must see the taller figure of Bedford. Her surprise and her emotion added to her beauty, as she made her guests welcome.

"My dear," twittered Mrs. Carstairs, "how lovely you look! How young! Why, you are handsomer than ever; your sister *would* be jealous! What a heavenly house! What an ideal setting for you!"

And Schermerhorn, transferring reluctantly his attention from the mistress to her surroundings, acknowledged: "It is a stunning old place. It suits you admirably. It would have to be a terribly swell second best to tempt you away from here, I guess. I don't wonder you prefer it to knocking about Europe."

When she had shown them over the house and heard their enthusiastic admiration of the old, rich woodwork, the mirror-like floors, the Desmond silver that made the buffets look like black hillsides covered with gleaming snow, the portraits of the Desmonds done by Baker, and the heirlooms brought over by the *Mayflower* and left with their traditions to this last spinster daughter, she gave them tea in the drawing room behind a giant silver tray, with blue and white china and the family silver, so worn and thin that it had a right to wear the frail, fragile lines of a crest.

Schermerhorn could not take his eyes from her slender figure in its clinging gray dress. At her girdle a bunch of violets sent forth their warm perfume, as he stood by her.

Mrs. Carstairs said, confidentially: "I suppose you have heard all the latest foreign news?"

"I take the *Figaro* and the *Times* and a few magazines, and so manage to keep just a week behind," Miss Desmond answered, purposely misunderstanding.

"Nonsense! I mean the family news," Mrs. Carstairs persisted, assuming intimacy.

Miss Desmond had not heard a word from Europe since she left it ten months before. She could scarcely, however,

say this to her guest. "I have no late letters," she confessed, with effort. "Have you?"

"Some friends of mine are in Nice," launched forth Mrs. Carstairs, "and they have seen Mr. and Mrs. Bedford. They say his devotion is something wonderful; he never leaves her. In the afternoons, when they wheel her along the esplanade, he is always at the head of her chair. It seems her face is not disfigured at all, and that she follows Bedford with her eyes in the most touching way. She adores him."

There was silence for a few moments. Mrs. Carstairs, caressing the handle of her umbrella in her gloved hands, went on: "Lady Morges-Fair is in Egypt, you know. After the marriage she went away at once; and they say, my dear, that Bedford won't have his mother-in-law with them at all. But you will tell me this is all gossip, I suppose."

Whatever conventional reply Miss Desmond might have made to this, she was spared the trial. Schermerhorn, who had not lost one change of her face, interrupted, and, beginning a story, utterly malapropos, carried it on to the end, then rose and took his voluble sister away.

The next week he returned alone. When once again in the library by Miss Desmond's side, he said:

"I've been trying to make up my mind to think of some one else as a wife. You see, I was not meant to go on alone; I believe I could make some woman happy. But since I've seen you again, I know there is no one else for me in the world. If it's ten years to wait—why, I would rather take my chance." But Miss Desmond it was who put her hand on Schermerhorn's, and the expression in her eyes, as she met his, took from him at last all hope away.

"My dear friend," she said, tenderly, "you must make your home. You will bring happiness to some woman, but it can never be me. I wish it might have been, almost," she said, hurriedly. "I wish I could have cared for you; but, you see, your feeling scarcely touches me. You see how cold I am—how ungrateful."



He paled, his eyes grew moist. She went on: "I will tell you something that may help you to forget me. You remember what your sister said about the eyes of the woman Mr. Bedford married following him wherever he went?" She paused, caught her breath, and a red crept along the pure contour of her cheek, slowly, as though reluctant to stain such a fair surface. Then she said:

"So my eyes follow him wherever he goes—so my heart follows him wherever he goes."

Schermerhorn said, after a second's silence: "I can't thank you enough for giving me your confidence; and, while I can't say I am glad to know, still it brings me nearer to you."

"I think," she said, and passed her hands across her eyes, "that it will, perhaps, help you to put me forever out of your life."

It was many days before she could slip into the unbroken routine of her life again. The interruption had been too brusque, and the pain once again aroused was as sharp and poignant as of old. She now could construct for herself an image of Robert Bedford's present. She could see him bend over the invalid in her chair, and she was amazed and terrified at the feelings, rebellious and daring, that came to her, coupled almost with a horrible wish for a solution which would leave him free. This could not hold its place with her for long, and she scourged it away from her mind and soul until she was able to say that she accepted, and that she would not have it otherwise; and it was only then that she knew peace.

If the beauty and completeness of life depend not on what we get out of it, but what we put into it, then the following years of Miss Desmond's life were beautiful, if not perhaps life in the accepted sense of the word. She had been lifted to a pinnacle with elysium around her on every side, then asked to inhabit a valley of desolation. She was adored by all who knew her; the poor and the wicked could not resent a presence such as Miss Desmond's. Her beauty alone

was a pleasure to contemplate. Her soft handclasp, her word of absolute understanding, her tenderness, opened all hearts to her. She displayed no nervous ardor in her work, as though she were trying to forget a personal grief. It was more a peace than a stimulus, and the current of consolation that ran from her to those who suffered found the most aching of hearts and brought it relief.

It would be vain to say she had not looked for a letter. For months the post never arrived but she touched it with apprehension lest she be deceived. When at the year's end she grew to accept Bedford's silence, life was easier, if less live. "I shall go on," she thought, "like this year after year until, little by little, I grow to wonder that I was ever anything but a deserted old maid."

She never considered this state of affairs without there rose poignantly before her eyes the garden at Territet in its loveliness of scene and springtime beauty; without hearing again the voice of the woman as she sang "Ninon."

Meanwhile her garden was a model—the perfect pivot from which all gardens of the district would swing, if they could. Two terraces flanked the south and front of "The Pillars." These were devoted to brilliant plants—hydrangeas, azaleas, peonies, carnations, oleanders and camelias, while at the south a rose garden, set after the fashion of France—close-trimmed, dwarfed trees—flowered from June until September. The effect of the garden was white and red, for these were the colors Miss Desmond best loved; and the place in late June, at the end of a summer's day, when the lady herself, in a white dress and garden hat, came out from the porch of her colonial house, descended the terraces and took her way among the flowers, while back of her the old and dignified mansion, white and serene, offered its traditions and its individual charm as background—was a scene much appreciated by the people of the county. Now and again Miss Desmond threw open her house and her hospitality wide, and

she asked people to stop with her. She had a horror of immuring herself and fossilizing—of losing her hold on life.

One July evening several years after her return from Europe, the post brought her was bulky. She placed it by her side on the little table with her work, the bunch of newspapers, some letters from Lynn and Boston, a breezy epistle from Mrs. Carstairs. As she perused and put the letters aside she came to the last one. Its very texture startled her—a thick, white envelope in a man's hand—and she remarked it bore a foreign stamp. As she turned it over in her hands her heart stood still for an instant. It was from Bedford, she knew, although she had never seen the handwriting in her life. Overcome by emotion, she rose. She wanted to fly with the possession to some hidden part of the world. No place could be too far removed, too isolated, too completely apart, for her to open this letter there. Secluded as was her library, she flew from it through the open window, and sought her garden.

It was still light. She went quickly down the steps into the farthest terrace, and seated herself on a stone bench by the low railing, over which a clambering vine twined its leaves and flowers.

Then she broke the letter's seal.

At the first reading, her heart beat so violently that she could not catch the meaning; she was borne along on the words, seized by them, held fast by them, caressed; and yet she did not understand them at all! At the end the signature, "Robert," nothing more, was pressed to her lips; her tears fell on it. After a moment's reprieve, she re-read.

Three years! After such a long time—such a fast—such a famine—a man may surely break his word to himself and hold a moment's festival. I am at Moloya. You have never been here, it has no memories. I am three thousand miles away, and yet I am writing to you. Around me are all the chains of my existence. I am a prisoner, a captive, a man half dead and half alive, and yet I am writing to you. Do you know what it means? Do you take it in? It is as if down a parched and aching body cool streams of delight were being gently poured, a refreshment and relaxation. I have not written in these years for your sake. I have

thought that in silence and absence you might change, and although the idea of it is the keenest grief I could know, it has nevertheless been almost a hope, for I cannot bear to believe that you have suffered as I have. I must not stand between you and happiness, and I knew that if I wrote, my letters would have plead to you so—called you so—that God knows what tragedy would have been the consequence. Yesterday Schermerhorn came here. I haven't seen him in all this time. He was very kind; you remember that I once said I did not like American men? I take it back now. He talked to me of you. With the greatest delicacy and feeling he told me of his visit to Denby. I think he told me all. I can only say that, while I would wish to lift up the world with all its wrongs, its mismatings, and toss it into space and try to find you in a new planet, still what Schermerhorn told me has, queerly enough, given me courage to go on in the sphere in which we all are. I make no complaint, I have none. Life is sometimes very long, and it is sometimes very short. Do not write to me unless you are ill, then I shall ask you to have some one let me know; otherwise, keep silence. I could not hear even so faint an echo as a letter would be, and do my duty to the end. It may be of interest to you to know that I am well.

ROBERT.

Miss Desmond sat in her garden until it grew so dark that she was completely obliterated in the stealing shadows. They came up from the cluster of pine trees on the lower lawn, and one by one irrevocably found their way across the terraces and enveloped the figure of the woman. The white spot of the letter shone in the dark as she held it in her hands.

It was mid-October. The country and landscape were held in the sunny haze known all over New England in this autumn month. The trees were not yet bare, every one of them, and those which had been swept of life trembled in the light and in the last glory of the summer; it seemed as though they vibrated to reclothe themselves with spring. Denby, in its brilliant and ruddy dress, looked like a golden village. Its avenues of great trees, maples and chestnuts, were still yellow and in abundant life. The little town with its immaculate houses, and clean, exquisite propriety, sparkled in the brilliant autumn sunshine.

As the gentleman who left the three

o'clock train came out of the station, he saw the few small houses ranged primly along a single street. There was no vehicle in sight.

"There ain't no regular livery," the station man informed him. "The folks walks; nobody rides to the depot except the Desmonds."

Yes; where was the Desmonds' place?

The official, long, lank and curious, viewed the stranger with profound interest. Through his near-sighted gray eyes he peered at him. "Stranger, I take it?" he asked, frankly.

The gentleman nodded.

"Foreigner, I judge." (Though why he should so accurately have consigned him to another country Bedford was puzzled to understand. He had at this moment no feeling of alienism.)

"Where is the Desmonds' place?" he repeated.

But the station master, who was the son of Mr. Briggs of the Green, and who had known the Desmond children in their childhood, was not to be discouraged. He had intuition; he was "smart."

"I guess you're Lord Morges-Fair," his eyes brightening with his discovery. "I knowed Beatrice Desmond when she was knee high."

Bedford kept his temper. "I am not Lord Morges-Fair, but I want to go to 'The Pillars,' my friend. Will you tell me how to get to it?"

"Oh, I'll go along with you; I'll lock up," said the man, obligingly. And Bedford, if a fee had been *en règle*, would gladly have paid a pound to have been rid of him. He passed through the town alongside of the volatile and familiar guide, who left him only at the village end.

"Miss Virginia would of met you, I guess, if you'd of let her know." He apologized for the family's delinquencies. "Go along the road until you see a turn and a gatepost—'The Pillars' is cut on to it."

The fellow stopped, and Bedford thought he was well rid of him; but he went on in his drawl:

"Went up there myself last spring. Took a telegram to Miss Virginia—re-

ceived it over the wire at the depot. 'Mary Struthers Bedford died to-day at Cannes.' (He pronounced it *Canes*.) Carried it up to 'The Pillars.' She was Beatrice Desmond's daughter—Miss Virginia's niece."

He actually ceased, gestured expressively up the road. "Go right along. Good-night to you." Bedford drew a breath of relief as the graceless figure slouched away, and left him to continue his route in peace.

After a little distance, he turned in at the stone gatepost.

Leaves had fallen in showers; they lay around him on each side of the drive in great piles of October brown and gold. At the avenue's end was an arch; through it he saw a pale-blue patch of afternoon sky. The agreeable smell of burning wood in the air mingled with the breath of the pines. The avenue's approach was to the rear of the house, and he came out on a clean-cut lawn as verdant as spring, a carriage sweep, and a path around to the front of the house. He saw no one, and made his way through the rose garden, along whose beds and paths the leaves were strewn. When he reached the front of "The Pillars" he stood for a moment undecided; evidently the warmth of the day had tempted the entrance of the delicious air, for the windows and doors of the house were thrown open. He had an instinctive feeling Miss Desmond was not in the house. Before him the terraces were brilliant with chrysanthemums, white and red and gold. All the space was filled by their masses. Beyond the garden he looked across fields and valleys to the white village of Denby—small, primitive and low-set, nestling down among its golden trees.

At the foot of the last terrace he saw the bending figure of a lady in a soft brown dress the color of the leaves.

Bedford went down the terrace steps. She heard the approach and looked up. Her hands were full of white chrysanthemums, a great snowy bunch.

So, he thought, he had seen her first at Caux—her hands full of flowers. Now, as she saw him come toward her, she let the flowers fall.

# THE SHEEPHERDER

By B. M. Bower



MACK, shivering on the doorstep, his muzzle pressed close against a narrow crack in the door, quit snuffing lustfully at the smell of frying bacon long enough to cock one ear at the swirl behind him. The breathless swish of wind-driven snow was all about him. He listened a moment and turned, whining, to the crack again.

He hated the cold and the bitter drive of the storm, and he was hungry, with the hunger that comes to growing dogs and children. He could hear Dot setting the table, and he could smell the coffee boiling—not that he cared for the coffee, however. It was the bacon—and the warm boards behind the stove, just under the reservoir, where he could curl up and sleep—and it was Dot, with her soft hands patting his sleek, black head and making believe pull his ears. When Mike was gone he was not shut out like this to freeze, and he was not kicked cruelly in the ribs, either. He hated Mike, and he hated Mike's big overshoes that were at this very minute lying in his favorite place under the reservoir, making the boards nasty and wet with melting snow. If Mike were a dog—

Surely, there was something back there in the storm. Mack stopped whining, listened, shook the snow off his back and rushed out to the gate, barking loudly. There he waited, bow-wowling hysterically, keeping one eye on the door behind him.

In a moment the knob turned and Mike's tousled head appeared in a jealously meager opening, while the warmth of the kitchen, doing battle with the

cold from without, enveloped head and shoulders in a white haze.

"C'm back here, you fool, you! C'm 'ere!"

Mack only barked the louder.

And then even Mike's dull ears heard alien sounds—the yelp, yelp of sheep dogs and the confused murmur of many animals.

A shape took form beyond the gate and a voice greeted Mack, who subsided after a querulous growl or two that he should have made such a mistake.

"Hello! C'm in, whoever yuh be," called Mike, and opened the door wider. Mack, trying to sneak in unnoticed behind the stranger, got another kick for his pains, and retired to nurse his wrath and his ribs in the coal shed.

Mike shut the door and cursed the cold.

"Oh, it's you, Joe! Come up t' the fire and thaw out. Didn't walk, did yuh?"

"Thanky, Mike. I can't stop. My sheep's out here. I just stopped t' get located, for I was plumb lost. I seen the light, but I couldn't tell who's 'twas."

"Sheep driftin', hey? Hope they pile over a cut-bank, some'ers. Supper's about ready—ain't it, Dot? You warm up a little, and then we'll eat."

A fair-haired girl in blue dress and checked apron was kneeling on the further side of the stove, taking something from the oven. The man looked again and saw it was biscuits—long rows of biscuits in a pan, with crusty, light brown tops and a delicious smell.

"Why, Joe Porter! You sure have drifted off your range, haven't you?"

You're just in time; supper's ready, and I guess there's plenty of it."

She smiled at him, showing him three dimples and a row of pretty teeth—surely an unfair array of weapons to flash before a weary man's face. And the biscuits—and the bacon. He smiled back at her, but shook his head regretfully.

"It looks good, all right, but I can't stop. The dogs can hold the sheep t'gether for a few minutes, but I can't stay t' supper. The river ain't fenced down here in your field, is it, Mike?"

"You still herdin' fur Taylor?" Mike's face took on a crafty smile. He hated Taylor, and he hated Taylor's sheep. He stopped just short of hating Taylor's herder as well. "Man, you're crazy t' follow them fool sheep a night like this. They'll stay in the field, likely. My line fence is good—it'll hold 'em. Set down and take off them overshoes and git yer feet in the oven."

"Is the river fenced?" persisted Joe.

Mike moved the coffeepot from the back of the stove to the hearth, where the steam of it smote the herder's nostrils, and his empty stomach yearned after it.

"Aw, never mind the river—come and eat yer supper. If yuh want t' commit suicide, they's easier ways than freezin'."

"I'll have t' go—much obliged, Mike. I couldn't get 'em home, against this storm, so I'll just have t' stay with 'em. There ain't—could I get 'em in a corral or some place, for the night, Mike?"

"Naw, yuh couldn't. I ain't got no shelter for Taylor's sheep. You can turn 'em loose in the field and let 'em take chances—seein' they're here. An' you're welcome t' stay here, with a good supper an' a good bed; I ain't got any quarrel with you."

Dot had poured a cup of coffee, trickled a thin stream of canned cream into it, and added sugar.

"Here, Joe, you drink this, anyway. It'll warm you up. You better stay. A man's worth more than a bunch of sheep."

Joe took off a mitten and emptied the cup in two great gulps.

"That's sure all right, Miss Hawkins, thanks. I'd like t' stay, all right. I ain't stuck on blizzards—but I can't leave them poor animals t' face it alone."

He pulled the door open and listened, then closed it and set his broad back against it. The dogs were holding the sheep, he could tell by the sound. He could afford to steal another minute of light and warmth and of being in Dot's presence.

"Oh, here's that song yuh wanted, Miss Hawkins," he said, fumbling inside his overcoat. "I copied it off last night. I hope yuh can make it out. It's all there, I guess."

Dot took the paper, written closely with lead pencil, and slipped it into her pocket. Then she held out a paper bag, warm and moist from the hot biscuits and bacon it held.

"Take this along, Joe. It'll come handy, maybe. Oh, it's just to pay for the song, so don't say anything. I'm awfully obliged."

Joe looked wistfully around the shabby little room, and at the face of the girl.

"Well, I must get in motion. Good-by."

"Good-by," repeated Dot, her eyes misty. "Good luck."

"So long, Mike," added Joe, cheerfully.

The door slammed, shutting out the wind and the snow and the cold. Shutting out the tall form of the shepherd as well. Mike lifted the lid of the stove and laid in a lump of coal, dragged his chair across the floor to the table, and took up knife and fork.

"What'd you want t' give him all the biscuits fur?" he growled. "A fool like that ought t' go hungry—and freeze, too."

"I didn't," retorted his sister, calmly. "There's plenty left. He ain't a fool, either. He's what I call a brave man."

"He's what I call a darned fool," reiterated Mike, sullenly.

Dot crumpled the paper in her pocket and listened, shuddering, to the wind.

Out in the field, where the world

seemed but a dizzying dance of frozen, white meal, Joe plodded steadily against the wind, guided by the staccato of his dogs. The sheep huddled together, their weazened, reproachful little faces turned from the cruel beat of the blizzard.

Joe took his station behind, and, once his face was sheltered, set his teeth greedily into the crusty warmth of a biscuit. He had eaten breakfast before day, had munched a chunk of sourdough bread with a cold slice of bacon at noon, and had drunk from a brackish spring. Then the blizzard swept down upon him before he could reach shelter, and the sheep refused to face it home, and he had walked and shouted and cursed the shivering, drifting blot of gray. So they had wandered blindly until now.

Joe thrust his bare fingers into the bag and counted the biscuits. Two—three—four—there had been five—light, fluffy things, such as only a woman can make. He caressed them each in turn. The warmth of them—and the smell—and the crisp, sweet bacon between!

Only a healthy man who has walked long hours in the cold may know the keen agony of hunger, or the ecstasy of yearning at the whiff of fresh fried bacon. The fingers closed around a biscuit.

"Oh-h, Bonnie!"

A dog voice, a tired, patient voice, answered, away to the right. He could hear her scurry toward him, and he knew the trustful shine in her eyes, even though he could not see.

The little creature bounded against his legs and whimpered pitifully. Joe stooped in the snow and patted her eager little head.

"It's ladies first, ain't it, Bonnie, old girl? Here! What d'yuh think of this now? Smell it once! Ain't that the stuff? Yuh wasn't looking for no such handout as that, out here in this frozen hell, where the freeze is ground up into flour and thrown in your face, hey? Naw, it's a cinch yuh wasn't. That went down easy, didn't it? Here's another, old lady—put it away where it'll do the most good. They're out uh

sight, them biscuits are, Bonnie, cause—Dottie made 'em!"

It seemed that even the dog read the wistfulness of the last whispered words, for she raised her cold muzzle against the man's chilled, brown cheek, and whined. Joe pushed her gently from him and stood up.

"That's all, Bonnie. Lad's got t' work, too, this night, and he's going t' have a taste. There, now—go on—way round 'em!"

The dog gave a short, shrill yelp which held more of courage and not so much of weariness and bounded away into the blur.

Joe listened until he heard her driving in the stragglers on the far side of the band. Then he sang out, cheerfully:

"Hi, Laddie!"

From the left came a glad yelp and another dog wallowed up to the master and crouched, fawning, at his feet. As before, Joe stooped and greeted him like a comrade.

"Good boy! You're sure the proper stuff, Lad. And what d'yuh think, say? Here's your supper, all hot from the stove. Ain't that the clear article? Say, Lad, how's your appetite fer warm biscuits, hey? Set your teeth into that once and tell us what yuh think. Ain't it a peach? Say! You're sure the lad that can appreciate good grub on a cold stunt like this—you bet. If you'd a seen *her*, lad, with the lamp a-shining on 'er hair and in 'er eyes when she handed these out t' me, you'd love her, lad—you sure would. No, there ain't any more—I took one myself (it was an odd one, yuh see). I just *had* to, it smelled so good—and *she* made it. Well, lick my fingers, then. I wish I hadn't eat that other one, lad—on my soul I do. I was a big chump, that's what. There—go back and keep 'em close—go on!"

The dog ran back to his post and the man sighed, folded the paper bag as best he could, and put it tenderly away inside his coat before he followed after his sheep.

Tramping blindly with the wind at his back, he pictured the little room he had left behind. He smelled the coffee



boiling, and heard the rattle of the dishes, while they ate. He felt the warmth, even while he thrashed his body with his arms to fight off the creeping numbness in his hands. He called cheering words to his dogs, and tried to forget the gnawing hunger while he hummed the song he had penciled so painstakingly the night before, in the little cabin where he lived alone with his friends, the dogs.

"There's a sob on every breeze—"

"There sure is, all right, on this one. What's the matter, Bonnie? Oh-h, Bonnie! Why, damn it, it's the river—and no fence!"

He set off at a run toward Bonnie, raging at her charges and trying all she could to turn them. Stumbling, breathless, slipping on the wiry sand grass which bordered the river, Joe reached her and heard the rush of water close below—too close.

He whistled imperiously to Lad, who, all unconscious, was pressing the band nearer to the death that waited a scant two rods away. Lad came with a rush and together they charged the bunch desperately. It was hard work, in the face of that gale, and by the time they were safe away from that treacherous, overhanging bank, Joe felt almost warm.

Then the dreary march began again. Mike Hawkins' south fence held them for a few minutes, but it had only three wires and they were not of the tightest, and the sheep crawled under, leaving whole handfuls of wool to gather snow and swing on the barbs. Beyond, there was no river, but there were dangerous washouts where the surrounding country drained into the coulees.

Into one of these the sheep drifted, and followed its windings like gray troubled waters, to its outlet in the coulee. Then, worn with travel and pinched with cold, they halted at last under a high, rocky bank and crowded close for warmth, while the wind passed harmlessly over their heads to the hillside beyond, and only the snow sifted silently down upon their cowering backs.

The dogs lay down on the outer edge and licked their chilled feet while they rested, while their master tramped up and down beside them, beating his hands to keep the blood moving and thinking of many things.

He wondered how a man felt who could refuse shelter to suffering brutes on such a night, because of a prejudice against their owner, and calmly allow a comrade to face that wilderness of cold, also because of that prejudice.

He wondered if Dot read the song he had given her, and if she noticed the smudges where he erased words not spelled at first to his liking.

He wondered if the coffeepot still stood on the stove, with the coffee hot and strong and fragrant.

What a bitter thing is a blizzard—a blizzard at night! How the cold eats up a man's courage and grips at his blood, chilling it even as it bubbles fresh from his heart. Why hadn't he left the sheep? What was it Dot had said? "A man is worth more than a bunch of sheep." Well, yes. But is a man worth more than his honor?

What if he had left them? No one could blame him, surely—no one, that is, except himself—and—yes, Dot. She knew he would not stay, else why did she pour that cup of coffee? Coffee? What wouldn't he give for a cup now? Yes, and one of those biscuits.

Br-r-r, but the cold could bite! There would be a loss among the sheep—the weak ones couldn't stand a night like this. It was tough enough on the strong. Was that a coyote? What business had even a coyote out on such a night?

For comfort he turned to his dogs.

"Bonnie, old girl, this is sure hard lines, ain't it? I'd set down and let you snuggle agin' me and get warm, if I darst. It's mighty little warmth you'd get, though. I ain't running no furnace heat at the present time, old lady, I tell yuh those. How's it coming, Lad? Think they'll find us when it lets up, hey? I'd hate t' have any money up on it, wouldn't you? But we ain't all in yet, you bet you my life we ain't. Our paws don't go in the air just so

long's they can wiggle-waggle—ain't that right?

"Gee, Bonnie, I wisht I could lick my paws and get some feel into 'em! I wisht I could stick 'em into the oven them biscuits come out of—Dotty Hawkins' oven. I wisht I could get hold of *her* little paws—they're soft and warm—that warm yuh can feel 'em clear to your toes, lad. That's right. Yuh can."

When day sifted through the snow clouds, the storm had not lifted, though it raged less fiercely.

Dot cleared away the breakfast feverishly, and swept the kitchen with less care for the dust under the stove and in the corners than was usual to her methodical nature. Mike toasted his feet in the oven and smoked.

"There's five calves missin'," he grumbled. "Drifted off when the blizzard struck yist'day. I wisht it'd clear off so'st I c'd go and look fur 'em."

"I'll go," volunteered Dot, eagerly. "I don't mind the storm a bit. I think it's fun to ride in it."

Mike sucked on his pipe and grunted.

"Anything's fun that yuh don't have t' do. If yuh go, yuh want t' fix fur it. This ain't no day for women's skirts a-floppin' on a side saddle. You go like a man, if yuh go at all. Put on my chaps an' fur coat."

Having thus eased his conscience, he drooped his lank body to the heat and prepared for a comfortable forenoon, at least.

Dot, having put on masculine attire, made other strange preparations for hunting stray calves. For one thing, she took a pint flask and filled it nearly full of strong, black coffee, stole into Mike's room, and finished filling it from Mike's jug of brandy, then corked it tightly and slipped it into a pocket in the fur overcoat.

"Has the wind changed since last night?" she asked, when she was ready, with only her eyes to tell you who she was.

"Nah. Ain't likely to, either," grunted Mike.

Outside, she called Mack, and waded awkwardly, in her strange garb, to the barn, where she saddled not one horse, but two. Mike had not even offered to saddle up for her, and it took some time, cumbered as she was by the fur coat. She wondered, as she struggled into the saddle, how men managed to carry so many clothes. She was stifling with heat as she rode away to the south.

Following the line fence, she discovered the place where many ragged little white bunches swayed on the lower wire, and rolled precipitately off her pony.

With a hammer which she had stuck in her pocket for just this emergency, she deliberately pulled staples, the number of which would have wrung the soul of Mike, had he seen her. When the wires lay flat she led the horses over them, mounted and rode on before the wind.

A mile of straight level, then came the broken ground where the washouts lay. She stopped, called Mack to her, and held something down for him to smell—a folded, white paper, covered with penciled writing.

"Seek him, Mack!"

Mack understood. It was the tall fellow who never kicked a dog, but always had time for a pleasant greeting, and who followed sheep around the country. It was perfectly simple. To find him, one had only to find the sheep—and did not the odor of many sheep cry aloud to the very heavens? Seek him? It was a joke at which he could have laughed. Down this washout, for instance, the air was rank of sheep. A little further, now—

Dot rode up to the shivering, gray patch under the bank, where two weary dogs stood guard, and a wearier man stood back and forth along a pitiful, black-beaten trail.

He eyed her stupidly, still staggering along the path he had made.

"Hello!" he said, as one half-wakened from sleep. "Are yuh—looking—f'r some one?"

"I'm looking for you, Joe." Dot choked and swallowed hard.

Joe lurched nearer, studying her figure wonderingly.

"Dotty—is it—you? I'm—about all in, my girl."

"No, you ain't, either," cried Dot, fiercely, tearing open her coat. "A man like you—to keep your feet and your wits all night—you ain't going to give up now. I never slept for thinking of you in the storm. Here, drink this, and then climb onto Mike's horse. Here, it will steady you."

Joe lifted a wooden hand and dropped it again, with the shadow of a smile.

"Can't, Dot. My hands—they're snowed under, yuh see."

Dot tore at the cork with her teeth. "Here, Joe—lean against me—that way. I'll hold the bottle. Drink it all—every drop. There's brandy in it—I stole some of Mike's."

When Joe spoke again his voice was firmer. The light came into his eyes.

"You're the proper stuff, little girl.

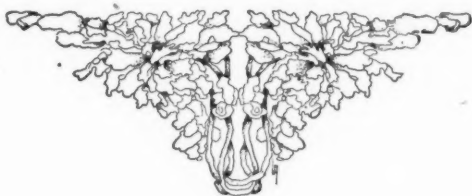
A little more and I'd a-been all in. I can't climb into that saddle—I'm limber as a froze jack rabbit—that's what."

So Dot got down and helped him, while the horse, which was used to having Mike boosted into the saddle in the gray of a morning, waited decorously till they were quite ready.

"I'll send Mike after some one for the sheep. A man's life comes first—*yours* does, Joe. Mother'll be home t'-day, and she's as good as forty doctors. You'll stop with us till you're well."

Joe steadied himself in the saddle, though he could not hold the reins with his frozen fingers.

"Come, Lad," he said, huskily. "Come, Bonnie, my girl. Yuh mind them biscuits yuh had? You'll get some more just like 'em, maybe. We're going t' heaven, sure. We're going—home—with Dottie."



## TWO WOMEN

ONE woos him with her dauntless eyes, that speak  
Of depths her shallowness knows not; and woos  
With bend of throat and tender droop of cheek,  
And mouth that smiles and dares, and voice that coos—  
With all the subtle and the potent ways  
That women know, to kindle and cajole;  
Yet holds him lightly, whom she lures and sways,  
Yet holds him lightly, wanting heart and soul.

And one, because she loves him with a might  
That half affrights her—one has no sweet sign,  
No word, to guide him swiftly and aright  
To the safe haven of her arms, the shrine  
Of her warm breast: but, powerlessly dumb,  
Waits in the stillness of her yearning days  
What joy, what blighting bitterness may come,  
And trusts, and tremulously fears—and prays.

EMMA A. OPPER.

# RENAISSANCE

By Margarita Spalding Gerry



MRS. CATHEL stared at the trees and telegraph poles flying through the early dusk with fascination—and some dread. She leaned on the cinder-strewn window sill, her chin—its soft willfulness not the least charm of her complex face—resting on her clasped hands.

A slackening of its iron speed, and the train stopped with protesting creaks before the station at Framingham. The electric lights were already on. Framingham!—in half an hour she would be home. Reuben would already be putting on his greatcoat. He would turn down the light in his study, pass the nursery, pause involuntarily to glance into the empty room. The shadow would be over his face as he descended the stairs. Then the outer door would clang heavily after him.

Wellesley! He would be at the Boston and Albany when the train crept in, just inside the grating—he always managed that. And he would kiss her, not knowing. She couldn't tell him until they were in the cab going home. All that time she must answer him, meet the contentment in his quiet eyes, as if nothing had happened.

Auburndale! She must get her things together, they were so scattered. She hated to be hurried at the last. And she would need to be quiet before she met him, to think how to say it— A panic seized her. Just as the tremor, foretelling departure, ran through the train, she snatched at her luggage and almost ran out of the car. She could not face him until he knew.

Mrs. Cathel looked dully about her

from the platform. The pretty gray station had always seemed so friendly before. She couldn't stay there. She must find some place where she could be alone until she found a way to tell Reuben. There was the Plympton—that would do.

Her voice startled the clerk from his *Transcript* into unaccustomed solicitude. People always did more for Gertrude than she asked or than they realized. There was a quality in her voice that was not pathos, or tenderness, or command, but suggested all three things. She had no interest to spare for the room he assigned her after deliberation, although the bell boy who conducted and the clerk who supervised went away satisfied. They had hardly reached the office before her bell rang, and Buttons, out of breath, was able to see her again. It was paper she wanted, and pen and ink.

She threw off her hat impatiently, and began to write:

Reuben, there is something I must tell you. I found I was not brave enough to tell it when I could see your face. By this time the train will be in and you will be afraid something has happened. You will go back home to see if you had made a mistake, and then, dear, you will be anxious for a time—until you get my letter. And it— But I mustn't think.

I want to make you understand it all, from the beginning, and then when I see you—if you come—I won't have to wait.

Reuben, when the baby—went, everything stopped— Oh, I can't talk about it, I don't have to, you know. You

were better than I, for you helped me to bear it; you were, dear Reuben. I may have seemed brave, but it was only because I was dead. Everything I saw was dead. I was surprised when the wind moved the leaves. My love was dead, too. I used to look at you and realize vaguely how good you were, how you suffered, see the lines about your mouth and wonder what it all was I used to think I felt.

But when last spring came I was glad to see the green again. You remember the little pale violets I put on your desk in Willard's silver cup—I found them sheltering themselves under a rock one day. And then I began to feel again a little, and I was very fond of you, and lonelier when you were away. We drew together, dear, and we remembered that we had each other.

I think we were more tender to each other than we had been, perhaps because we were afraid not to be happy. We understood people better that were suffering. But our youth, Reuben, our beautiful youth! It was a gray world with no joy in it—except for the mating birds, the little children rejoicing in their warm, sunny playground, the boys and girls who walked together. There was no thrill for me, no leap of the blood when one thought of life, no zest in adventuring into uncertainties. The road before me was level. I was content enough except for the Question. At first it had come at wide intervals and always to be silenced. It grew in insolence until it challenged every moment.

"Is this what life had promised, this negation of all ecstasy?" it asked. Had not our love promised more? I used to watch the birds shrieking with joy over their house furnishing, the pretty, silly little girls, so exquisite in their summer gowns, the young fellows by them, responding their ignorant best to the instinctive girlish witcheries. And I envied them savagely the glamour that I knew lay about them. For my life stretched before me, sweet and sheltered, but its boundaries, even to the horizon, in a cold, clear light. I was never to know—so I thought—how good it

might be even to be uncertain of love, that one might have the quivering delight of being assured; never sought with desperation, never wooed—You see, Reuben, I am telling you everything.

Anne Bethune's invitation awakened a mild interest. I was glad to shake off the lethargy that swaddled me. And when Anne's footman, gigantic in his furs, covered us almost to the chin in bearskins, I knew I was glad. I loved it all from the first—the hard floor of the icy streets, the bitter air that whipped my cheeks and set my blood racing, the unending melody of the sleigh bells.

There is no gayer household in Montreal than that of the Bethunes. When I first came I wondered at Anne's youth—we had been at school together. But they had had no child. The stout, jolly father, the two big, blond brothers, the light-hearted young husband, and Anne petted and caressing, no one of them had ever asked himself, had ever asked herself, the Question. The men work, of course; they are too sensible not to. It's a respectable sort of thing to do. But the real day begins when they come home. They are all something in a bank, I believe; all but the younger brother, who goes in for painting, and is grieved unmercifully by the rest.

As soon as I came it began, although that is hardly the thing to say, for the sport never ends. Anne and I skated in the morning, alone except for some other girls and one or two men who hadn't even a bank or law office. In the afternoon the men met us at the toboggan slide with two or three girls. Mr. Bethune was more eager than anyone else. Have you ever been tobogganing, Reuben? No, of course you haven't. Well, it's absolutely intoxicating. The first time you are packed into the funny, long toboggan and drop over the edge of the "chute," your heart stops beating. If you had time to think you would vow never to be so beguiled to sudden death again. As it is, you have just time to feel a mighty resentment against those who entrapped you. And as you begin to feel it you are swimming delightedly along the gentler slope

at the end of the slide. And it's so delicious that your sole idea is to get to the top again as quickly as you can. Then the sunshine and the sharp, dry air, and the rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed girls in their heavy woolen sweaters and toques, the Canadian men, such a stalwart, handsome set—hundreds of them, men and women as well as boys and girls, all just thinking about coasting and not concerned about their duty to humanity! All these things get into your blood, and you trudge up and swoop down until your wiser friends drag you away with barely time to dress for dinner.

Of course we had the usual things, jams, and dinners, and bridge. Anne and the rest went in for them, and enjoyed them as they do everything, so eager to be pleased. But for me, the winter out of doors was an intoxication. And to play in it with these dear people who had never grown up! I didn't know myself. I was gay with my heart as I have been with words. The big, hearty fellows chaffed me, and I laughed at their sledge-hammer jests. I grew untiring, I tingled with life and the joy of living it.

And always they talked of Jimmie Carmichael. Whether we coasted, or tramped down the moon's path over the fence-high, glittering crust, or watched a curling match, his name was always on some one's lips. He could guide a toboggan better than anyone else, could outwalk any snowshoe club, could conquer any horse, could blaze a trail in any wilderness. Now he was away with a guide, hunting moose in Manitoba. He would be back in a few days.

And he came. I wish I could make you see him, I think then you would understand. I saw him first playing polo. He is tall and broad, but graceful as a wild creature. His hair is dark red, and close-cropped to keep down the wave. The part is a fine, white line. And his hair is so soft and vigorous that—I have found myself wanting to stroke it. I have never seen such hair. His eyes are red-brown, and laugh like a child's—no, not like a child's, they know their power too well, and have

looked on too many things, but still they have no care. And he has a cleft in his chin that makes people want to give him anything he asks for—and he has never been chary of asking. He walks as if for generations back no one of his race had ever troubled himself to look at his path.

He made Dick Bethune present him to me after the game. He had seen me. And from that time he managed to be with me continually. If we skated at ten o'clock he was on the ice first, he organized all the toboggan parties, he gave a costume ball on the ice at the country club at Beaulieu for us. Whenever we happened to drop in for five-o'clock tea, he made a point of calling—Dick Bethune is a guileless boy and it's easy to make him tell things. Jimmie Carmichael was continually at the Bethunes'—but, then, everyone went there. And always flowers, Reuben, such flowers! Great, glorious, prodigal boxes! He must have spent his days doing things for us. If we were out snowshoeing, just as we were getting a little cold and tired, he would lead us to some little inn the rest of us had never seen. And there everything would be ready for us, a blazing hot fire and a jolly hot supper. And somehow, Reuben, without saying it, he made me feel that everything was for me, that not one moment of the day was empty of the thought of me. I don't know when I first knew it, it just became part of the atmosphere, and after that he never let me forget it.

The worst of it is, Reuben—I liked it! To know that I was being watched, sought, surrounded by all this—like a fairy princess in the dear old story books! To know that he looked at me as a woman, not as a member of society; that he found me—almost beautiful. The evening of the Macrae cotillion he saw me for the first time *décolleté*—and he snatched at his breath. Yes, Reuben, I'm afraid I liked it. You must know it all. And it went to my head a little.

And before I knew it, I had become accustomed to the idea that he cared for me. I don't know how it happened.



If I had known it I could have prevented it. I didn't seem to be horrified at the idea, either, as I would have supposed. It was almost as natural as it had been to have men like me before I knew you. But you mustn't think, Reuben, that there was any—comment. He managed somehow to make me understand, while no one else saw it at all.

Somehow, as it went on, the past—our life together, yours and mine—melted away; and, in the present, three things stood out, you, and Jimmie Carmichael, and I. But you were not the married Reuben, the father of our lost little boy. You were Reuben Cathel, my lover and Jimmie Carmichael's rival. I felt as I did class day, when Ben Holliday and Clarence Blair made it difficult for you. Do you remember how hard you had to work for that last waltz—that waltz that never ended? It gave me a sort of wicked pleasure to think how you would have looked at Jimmie Carmichael sometimes. And all the time I was writing you proper married letters, with detailed accounts of everything we were doing! And I grew younger and younger, until I had to resist a temptation to do my hair in a long, girlish loop with black butterfly bows. Jolly Mr. Bethune was chuckling about their Canadian roses in my cheeks.

The night of the long sleigh ride to Longeuil, I was in a delirium of enjoyment. The brilliant moonlight, the bells, the heaped-up furs, the bright eyes and laughter all around, the swimming motion—it was so delicious. I loved the people for being so happy and for not stopping to think. Anne and her husband were in the back seat, but the overflowing furs, the tune of the bells, isolated us. Jimmie Carmichael was in a new mood, almost morose, with long, moody glances at me. But he didn't affect me, I was incurably joyous.

We were a little bit chilled—it was twenty degrees below—when we halted at Longeuil. So we all crowded around the stone fireplace with its great logs. We lounged in the disgracefully lazy chairs clubs always affect, and baked ourselves a cheerful red. Then when we had had a steaming hot supper, they

dragged away the bearskin rug, and we danced in the shadow-softened hall. The light of the roaring fire danced along the polished rafters overhead, and they threw it back in mellow gleams. The girls were delightful with their red cheeks and windblown hair, the men were unconscious and graceful in their easy strength, the music a *habitant* fiddler pressed into service. We danced country dances. Partners met, courtesied with abandon, the men cut pigeon wings. Down the center and swing your partner! Every dance ended with a romp.

There was a stir in the room, a pause, laughing voices in contention. Everyone was looking toward the middle of the room. A man's voice near me explained:

"Oh, they're trying to get Carmichael to dance a *pas seul*."

"A double shuffle, you mean," laughed Archie Hanson. "He knows every step the lumbermen and Canuck trappers can teach him."

Through an opening in the merry crowd about him, I caught a glimpse of Jimmie Carmichael standing vigorously protesting. As I looked, he caught my eye, and smiled straight to me across the crowd—as if in answer to something he saw there. Next, there was a murmur of satisfaction, and he took his position resignedly. There was a quick clearing of the floor, girls scurried to the wide staircase that wound up to the floor above, the men hung over the balustrade.

He raised his right arm high above his head and stood there a moment laughing. The light in his eyes was reckless, but the smile on his lips was very sweet—I watched him triumphing in the intricacies of the steps. His feet spun, and twinkled, and shuffled, and slapped the floor, his head was thrown back, he was smiling now in obvious enjoyment. But it was the beautiful body that refreshed one's eyes—slender waist, powerful shoulders, clear red tan, eyes narrowed to a brilliant line, cleft chin thrust out. A sudden intoxication flashed from him to me, his lifted hand beckoned me—I felt myself out in the

open, in midsummer, with a sweep of grassy hills around me, the good sun-baked earth sending up its breath. And billows of hills beyond, which drew me—and a little road, an arch of cool green shadows, which wound temptingly away. The wander spirit seized me. When the dance was over, he made his way to me through the applauding crowd. He looked at me a moment, quietly.

"Come with me," he said; "I want to talk to you."

I followed him—it doesn't do any good now to wonder why. He took me into the little cardroom, which happened to be empty. The room was half in shadow, the fire and the mellow light of the reading lamp on the table making glowing patches in the soft gloom. He drew a chair before the fire for me. It was so soft and so big that it made me helpless. Then he sat down facing me. There was only a moment for me to be benumbed with suspense before he spoke.

"I think you know how I feel about you. I've been at no pains to hide it. I know some fellows would hide it, just as some would conquer it, and some would forget. But I've seen the moose and the half-breed choose their mates—I've chosen you and there's no turning back. And you will love me, won't you?" His voice dropped, and the change was so great that I sighed a little, and looked at him, but I didn't see anything but his eyes.

"I suppose it's what people call a sin—since you've a husband—but I don't look at it that way. If your husband can't keep you he has no right to you. He shouldn't have let you come off here by yourself. By Jove! I wouldn't!"

A grim stiffening of his features had disturbed the careless harmony of his face. I watched him dreamily, and felt the thrill of fear that isn't pain. For the moment I was the unshrinking captive of centuries back, watching to see which of two struggling fighters was the stronger—I was the border maiden, carried away in the headlong flight of a lawless Highland raider. He filled my mind and my eyes—there was some-

thing about him that forbade question. I said nothing, and, Reuben, as far as I can remember, I thought nothing. The rhythm of the dance was still in my ears, and the warmth of the room wrapped me in a sort of happy lethargy.

"I don't know what sort your husband is, it doesn't concern me especially. I used to know a fellow of his name once; one of the clever, ascetic, cold sort of chaps you find in the States now and then. I imagine that's the sort of influence you've been under. It's been great to watch you, in another atmosphere, blooming into—what you are now; and to have had something to do with it! And I'm going to have everything to do with it now! I've found you out, and no one could expect me to let you go. Could anyone, Gertrude? You needn't start, I've been calling you that to myself for the last two weeks. I love your mouth—it contradicts flatly everything the rest of your face says, for it knows how to laugh and—tempt. Did you know you were a Circe, little girl, and all the more because you don't really mean it? Some time when we're together scudding before the wind toward Havre, I'm going to kiss it enough to make up for all the times I've wanted to do it. And I—" His tone snapped something in my reverie. I shrank. He was watching me, and he noticed it. Even then I felt that he adjusted his tone. He went on, still watching me:

"You see, I've got to see the world with your eyes, it's such a stunning place." I like your little ideas, and the twist of humor; I've never known a woman that had any before. You've got a standard of your own, too, and I like that. You stimulate me to laugh, and you stimulate me to think, and—a little saintly-eyed thing like you can't know how you stimulate a fellow to love you. It's the jolly touch of the woman under the saint that sets a man wild. Of course, there will be a lot of fuss that's rather unpleasant before you can marry me. But it can be managed. And your husband isn't the man to fight it—he let you come off here by yourself. I know the sort, he'll suffer from the shock and let you go.

"And then, Gertrude, you and I and the world before us! Do you know how I can take care of you? There shall not be a stone in your path—and I know how to do a good deal toward making the face of the good old earth smile pretty pleasantly for us. We'll yacht across, and the auto shall meet us at Paris. We'll tour into all the sunny little corners of France, and winter on the Riviera—there's Egypt and Morocco. We'll have a fling at Monte Carlo. We'll try the German university towns, I've lived there a lot. You get the real Bohemia there, you know—the Latin Quarter has been in the limelight too long. How you'll enjoy it all, and the jolly outdoor life we'll lead! That's what men and women were intended to do. I'll give you as much of the world as I can get for you, and I'll love you—" He checked himself again.

"There's a little town in Normandy that you ought to know. The chevalier of one of the old Irish-Norman houses there is a friend of mine. His rent roll gives him about as much as a bank clerkship, but he's terribly patrician. The life is as near to an old-world idyl as you can get—the white and green of the sun-drenched village, the white-capped women—"

I was listening spellbound. If you send me away from you, Reuben, you must know it. He owned me. Before some element, dormant so long, his passionate force, the beautiful, vigorous life in him, pled to its mate. And the life he held out! When have I not dreamed of it? Everything pagan in me—and you used to tell me it was the larger part—stood breathless before the sunny, wind-swept vistas he opened for me. To live care-free, to wander, with some one who enjoyed, who did not question—Italy, Normandy, the green English world. To satisfy one's thirst for joyousness, to rest one's brain in delighting one's eyes. How much it would mean, how we had longed, you and I! You and I!

And then I caught myself. You and I! I almost laughed aloud. I did a moment later, when I realized fully that it was your face that stood out of Jim-

mie Carmichael's picture—and Jimmie sitting there doing his very best. It was Reuben Cathel that I wanted with me in the holiday world, younger by the falling away of these many years of living compressed into five, the glow of fervor in the blue eyes that people call cold. You and I, Reuben, having time and zest enough to love, and know how much we love!

I looked at Jimmie Carmichael, at his utmost power of fascination—and I knew him trivial, felt him sensual, realized the weakness in his determination. And, dear, it was with every magnetic current of my being, as well as with the outward rushing of my mind, that I chose you, as I did in the beginning. And it was not until the glow of triumphant feeling had died that I remembered to be ashamed.

As for Jimmie Carmichael—the rest is rather sordid. He was furious. Of course it was dreadful of me to laugh. He could hardly be expected to present a majestic figure, but he was—unnecessarily unpleasant.

This is the story, Reuben. At the last I couldn't face you to tell it. I didn't dare to be an onlooker while I dragged you through it. There can be no half truths between us. You must know that I wavered.

I will wait for you—or your message—here.

GERTRUDE.

The Plympton, Auburndale.

A messenger dispatched with the letter, she waited. She divided each hour into parts. One half hour she spent in freshening herself up a bit, brushing her gown, doing over her hair. Then, the paper—she had not looked at a Boston paper for a week. The Bradleys were in California, Constance Adams had gone to a rest cure. And the second editorial was Reuben's—Reuben—but she was not to think.

Another hour over dinner, an over-careful scrutiny of the menu—if she dressed the salad herself that would take time.

And then—panic. Reuben could never forgive her, or, if he did—for he loved her—there would always be a flaw.

And how could she live with him, knowing this? She had always been so sure of his approval. And Reuben was so high, so fine, in his integrity! People who did not know him thought him cold. And, then, he loved her so—to know that she had been attracted!

She wandered about the streets near to the hotel, rushing back at intervals, feverishly sure that he had come. Surely he had had time. It was dark now, too dark to venture out. She must stay in her room—no, in the reception room, she must be where she could see. He was taking time to think, that must mean the worst! What a fool she had been to write so, she had misrepresented it, and he would think—Half-past eight! She couldn't face a night without sleep, she would send a bell boy for some books. Perhaps some bromide would stop the horrible tremor that shook her. She could never get through the time, the nine o'clock train would be along in a few minutes, she could go to Reuben herself, and tell him she—Some one walked hastily into the office, she saw him from her corner, tall, with a swinging gait. She writhed at the stupid slowness with which the night clerk looked at the register; it was intolerable. The man was too tall for Reuben, she didn't know the coat. He turned, she rose with a startled movement and an inarticulate sound, they met just beyond the door.

"Wait a minute here, until I pay the bill," Cathel said. Oh, the soothing, kindly commonplace! Her hands were almost steady again.

They went up to her room to gather her luggage together. There he took both her hands and kissed her gently. She flushed a little and felt reassured—for a moment. Then she was seized with fear again, because of his coldness.

"Let us walk," she said, breathlessly, as he stopped to hail the Boston trolley.

"It's two miles, Gertrude," he said.

"Oh, I'm reformed, I can walk now." And then she blushed stupidly.

They walked a few minutes in silence; then she could bear it no longer.

"Well, Reuben?" she questioned, bravely.

His voice fell calmly upon her trouble. "Is there anything, dear, that we need to say?"

"I have told you, Reuben, but you—" her voice failed her.

"I am here, you see."

"But do you forgive me?"

"If I had anything to forgive I wouldn't be here."

"You are hiding something. How do you feel?"

"Much surer of you, now it has come."

"What do you mean? You couldn't have imagined—" She stopped in indignation.

"I didn't imagine. I knew—provided, of course, just that species of man appeared. I won you, yes, that day in Cambridge; but the other side of you, that buccaneering spirit, life hadn't gratified. You couldn't expect to find it with me, I suppose? Well, I know I'm not a likely sort of chap to find it in."

She turned to look at him.

"Reuben!"

"Do you suppose I have enjoyed submitting to the commonplace, Gertrude? I've had dreams, too."

She sighed tremulously, then looked for the first time at the familiar streets they were passing. The angel didn't bar the gate, then, she might enter again the garden that Reuben and she had tended. But—

"You are very calm about it!" Her discontent had flamed out.

Cathel said nothing for a moment, for a dragging minute.

"It's nearly nine, Gertrude, and your letter came at seven," he said, quietly. Then he hesitated. "I could have been here at eight."

She turned white.

"And that means?"

"You have some imagination."

"But I don't know you as you are now. What do you mean?"

"It means," he said, slowly, "that I had a fight with a devil in me that I had forgotten." He turned on her suddenly. "How do you suppose I read your letter? I knew Carmichael at Harvard. There were histories even then. You—

Gertrude—to be moved by that cursed, smiling beastliness, that knows how to put on the charm of a willful boy. I was in a frenzy of rage. I came to myself at the door. I had even passed the nursery, not thinking. I don't know just what was in my mind to do, but I wanted to find him. Well, I forced myself back. And I read it all. Then I knew that it was not because you were weak that you could be moved, but because there was this depth that I have never sounded. Don't you suppose I have known it? This last year has been enough. And you couldn't know the man, you poor little thing, dreaming your stories of an enchanted princess. My love came back, dear, but I almost lost the eight-fifteen car. You looked so tired, so beaten down when I found you. Come, Gertrude; come, dear, don't be tired now, this is the last stretch."

The light from the lantern fell upon them as they opened the door. He carried his wife to a chair, and began taking off her wraps. While she lay back resting, he brought her some wine, and stood over her while she drank it.

"The color is coming back," he said,

watching her gravely. For answer, she raised her hand and patted his face softly.

Then Cathel's composure broke. With a sudden exultant passion he raised her out of the chair and into his arms. The misery had gone out of his face and left it boyishly wistful. She pulled herself away, almost with terror.

"Not yet, not until you know, Reuben. It was because I loved you that I came back to you—away from him. Not because you were my husband—not even because of Willard. If it hadn't been so I would have gone; think of it! Reuben, I would have been a wicked woman."

He was very tender when he kissed her. But the kiss ended in an ecstasy that left them shaken and abashed.

"You called me, I chose you over again," she whispered. Then her eyes dropped again before his.

"But I'm afraid of myself," she added.

Cathel's blue eyes were joyously challenging the world.

"Kiss me again, sweetheart," he said. "I'm not."



## SONG IN WINTER

BOUGHS sough eerily,  
Winds wail wearily;  
Hark! there's a rook-cry floating down the flaw!  
Hours drag drearily  
That once danced cheerily;  
There's no red berry now left upon the haw!

Yet, in spite of woe, dear,  
How well I know, dear,  
Through all the clamor and the stress of storm,  
Love's bloom will grow, dear,  
Love's light will glow, dear,  
And Love will ever keep the ingle warm!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

# THE PHANTOM HA-HA\*

By Vincent Harper



“ABSURD!” said young Monty Pell, standing on the hearth at the club and gazing with the air of a devilish sport around the circle of men—a courtesy title allowed them on the eve of the Junior Steeplechase—who sat sucking brier-root pipes and real grown-up Scotch and soda, in their new pink coats.

“What’s absurd?” murmured the major, casually, and without turning or looking up from his paper.

“Why, March’s ruling about ha-has, you know,” replied young Monty Pell, elated by having attracted the major’s attention.

“Oh!” murmured the major again, and relapsed into his paper.

One after another of the innocents fulfilled the scriptures by showing that what is hidden from the wise, like March, the Master of the Norbury Fox Hounds, and the prudent, like the major, a mighty hunter, has been revealed unto babes. Some ha-ha fences, it was admitted, were taboo, and it was an open question whether or not the ha-ha in the “Glen Stuart” meadow was a legitimate take; but the M. F. H. was certainly in error when he ruled out the ha-ha in general.

“Absurd—ridiculous!” again declared young Monty Pell, bringing the debate to a close, and the new pink coats and brier-roots went off by twos and threes, leaving only young Monty Pell and the major.

Now, the mind of young Monty was

without salt and void. Moreover, he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow having great possessions and prepossessions, and the greatest of these was Montague. He was nearly eighteen, and as tall as his mamma. He wore man’s sizes of everything, and, if his coach’s prayers were answered, would get rid of his conditions and be a full-fledged Harvard freshman by Christmas. He was also healthy and wealthy and wise. He was, furthermore, unanimously elected president of the Junior Gentlemen Riders—a cadet movement inaugurated by March, in the hope of saving the coming generation from dancing and tennis and other vices—and now in the Thanksgiving vacation, when the Junior Steeplechase was to be run, he bore his blushing honors thick upon him, and his new pink coat and boots were as good form as March’s.

When the last of his cohort had ridden off, Monty ordered “another,” refilled his pipe, thrust his hands deep down into his breeches’ pockets, and looked at the major’s bald spot for some minutes.

“Oh, I say, you know, Major Har-topp,” he said, finally, “I waited, you know, to see you.”

“Hello, so you did, didn’t you?” replied the major, turning his head but not his chair, and still holding up his paper.

“Yes,” answered Monty, adding after a rather awkward pause: “I like you—awfully!”

“Oh, do you? I had feared that per-

\*This is the fourth in the series of hunting stories now appearing in consecutive numbers of AINSLEE’S. Those already published are, “The First Meet,” “By Eminent Domain,” and “From Saturday to Monday,” in the October, November and December numbers respectively.—THE EDITORS.



haps you did not. I feel relieved," said the major, wheeling the chair and all around this time, for he scented joy.

"Yes, honestly I do—we all do, too!" went on Monty, benignly; "for you don't josh us, like Mr. Ackers and Mr. Peabody, nor roast us, like the M. F. H., nor kid us, like old Mr. Craigie—so I like you!"

"This is so sudden!" answered the major, beginning to know why his knee had hurt him too much to go to the links—the gods had intended thereby to preserve him for—this!

"But I mean it," Monty assured the major, seriously, and the major bowed.

"Well, major, I waited to see you because I wanted to ask you something. Just what is a ha-ha, anyway?"

The major started. Only a moment before he had heard Monty pronouncing anathema upon March for his absurd ruling as to ha-has. Did the puppy really not know what a ha-ha was? Yes, there could be no doubt about his sincerity, or his innocence. So the major puffed meditatively for a minute or two, in order to let his imagination accumulate momentum. The major's imagination was ball-bearing and of very high gear. He also loved picture books, puppies, and Monty.

"Why, a ha-ha is a fence," he said, when the intention of the gods at last lay open before his mind.

"Of course, but what sort of a fence?"

"An invisible fence," replied the major, solemnly.

"Oh, I say, you know—don't you begin guying us, too!"

"Withdraw that, Monty. I never 'guy' anyone, as you know. I tell you, a ha-ha is an invisible fence."

"But, I say, major, I'm not a kid, you know."

"Far from it, my dear old chap. But I again tell you, a ha-ha is a fence that you can't see."

"Why not?"

"Because it is in a ditch or a depression of some sort."

"What for?"

"So that it will not disfigure the landscape, you know. Take the one in

the 'Glen Stuart' meadow, for instance. If it were not a ha-ha and so placed along the bottom of the little gully-like depression, it would cut the lovely view in two and spoil the effect of open sward right from the house to the river. Savvy?"

"Awfully clever thought, isn't it?" said Monty, approvingly.

"Oh, awfully!" acquiesced the major.

"But, see here, major, why does Mr. March rule them out?"

"Because—except in rare cases—they are regular death traps. You see, the banks are very wide apart, so that a fozzle would mean a dead horse, if not a dead rider—besides, all animals say 'ha-ha' when they see them, and they always bolt or balk at them," went on the major, with increasing gravity.

"Oh, I say, you know!"

"Well, then, just ask Lord Bertie, if you don't believe me. You see, sheep and cows and deer and puppies and things don't see the fence in a ha-ha until they reach it—and so they say 'ha-ha'—and turn tail. That's where the name came from, you know. You are going to consult Lord Bertie—I overheard some of the discussion just now—and you can ask him about this at the same time."

"Yes, the other men insisted upon my being a committee of one to wait on Lord Bertie—to get his opinion on Mr. March's absurd ruling, you know—and I expect to see his lordship this evening."

"That's right—but, for Heaven's sake, my dear Montague, do not let Lord Bertie think for a moment that you are ignorant—for the credit of the Norbury Hunt, you know. So you would better let him see that you know why a ha-ha is thought so dangerous—animals don't like a joke, you know—that's it."

"I'm on," replied Monty, and after the major had declined to "have something" with him, he took his departure, as did also the major the moment that the new pink coat had vanished behind the angle of the veranda.

"Delicious," said March, after the major had unfolded his inspiration,

"but do you really think that Lord Bertie will see the point? He has a sense of humor, as you say, but he likes a joke hung like his mutton and game, before he gets its full flavor--remember the way he nearly had apoplexy over that awfully good thing of Mrs. Wilmerding's ten days after she had gone!"

"Yes, I know," replied the major, sadly, "but I believe that if we are patient, and go into details, and supply him with a key and annotations, he may be got to see *this* one--worth trying, at least; so come, we must catch him before Monty is weaned and begins to take notice, you know."

They drove over to the Doolittle bungalow, where Lord Bertie and his brother had established themselves with some beturbaned East India servants, and caught his lordship just on the point of leaving.

In a few clear words, the major told him his new-found source of joy, and Lord Bertie proved them to have been traducers of his wit, for he laughed long and loud.

"Capital! No end funny, too," he said, "and you may jolly well believe that I shall twig the colt properly, you know."

The M. F. H. and the major retreated just in time, for Mr. Pell's dog-cart--the highest wheeled vehicle ever constructed--was heard crunching the gravel at the front door as the two conspirators slipped out at the rear.

Lord Bertie expatiated upon the history and philosophy of the ha-ha, dwelling at great length upon the reasons why it had been excluded from the list of the legitimate by the authorities on hunting, and finally led up to his nefarious end by casually dropping the remark that he assumed, of course, that Mr. Pell knew why a ha-ha was called a ha-ha.

"Certainly--it's because animals can't see it until they get right to it--and then, as Kipling says, they say 'ha-ha,'" replied Monty, with a trace of displeasure at his lordship's insinuation that the president of the Junior Gentlemen Riders was ignorant.

"My word! is that what you have

been told? Why, my dear chap, somebody has been ragging you, you know."

"Well, then, why is it?" asked Monty, feeling the ground going.

"I'm surprised, my dear boy, that you do not know; I am, really. The first ha-ha was erected in the year 1374, in the reign of Edward IV., and it had a fence, you know. But when Lord de Brake broke his neck at it, the fence was abolished by act of Parliament. They still have the ditches, you know, but no fences in them; but sheep and other animals are very conservative and superstitious, you know. So they still think that there is a fence at the bottom of the ha-ha, you know, and consequently don't try to get out--which is no end of a saving to farmers, you know."

Mr. Pell listened in silence. But all was not clear to him.

"But if there is no fence there, why does our M. F. H. rule them out? Surely, a narrow ditch with turf banks and no water is not such a beastly difficult proposition?"

"Ah, but you see, the horses have inherited the idea that there is a fence, you know," explained Lord Bertie, and Mr. Pell thought hard.

"But I'm almost certain that I saw a fence in the ha-ha at Kimbolton Chase--Lady Kimbolton was Miss Vanderpoel, you know," he said, apologetically, for Lord Bertie was final in the minds of the Junior Gentlemen Riders.

"That's the funny part of it," replied Lord Bertie, "for the tradition has become so deeply rooted in the mind of both man and beast that, for the life of us, we can't help fancying that there is a fence, you know."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Pell.

"Quite so!" cried Lord Bertie. "You say ha! ha!--and that's where the name came from."

Mr. Pell drove home a sappier but wiser man.

In the excitement of preparation for the great event of the morrow no more was heard of the ha-ha question, for in the course set out for the junior steeplechase there was no ha-ha, with or without a fence, visible or invisible.

The juniors went over the course in a way to make March hope much for the future of the country, and to make numerous anxious parents face the probability of bereavement—and Monty Pell won by a length over Harry Grantby, both young devils scoring in such mad time that the committee decided that both had earned the coveted honor of being allowed to enter the regular Norbury Hunt steeplechase on the following Saturday; it being March's policy to reward adolescent virtue by thus admitting those who proved indifferent to death to every possible opportunity for achieving it without delay.

The great annual steeplechase for the Craigie trophy was the crowning event at Norbury, and Lord Bertie—whose fame had long preceded him—looked forward to it with not entirely unmingled feelings. In the ordinary hunts he had already detected signs of possible trouble, for Ackers and March dared absolutely anything, while the major and Peabody and even old Craigie could render a deucedly good account of themselves under any and all circumstances—to say nothing of the unknown cracks from other hunts who were coming to put Norbury on its mettle.

More than once the honors of the hunt had been neatly taken out of his hands by one or other of these blooming American chaps, don't you know? But, then, at a hunt, anything—a pretty woman, a chat with the rector, too much dinner the night before, or just a chivalrous willingness to let the other fellow be happy—may account for one's temporary appearance of being a bit out of form. But not so with a steeplechase. A steeplechase is run under the solemn sanction of betting—and where there is betting there is moral obligation, for if only a cad would fail to pay a bet, nobody but a duffer would fail to win one from choice.

Moreover, in this coming event his powers were to be pitted, without fear or favor, against those of the best ever on this side—and a jolly beastly ticklish lot they were! In the straightaway the major on "Do It" could be depended upon "doing it" in a way to make even

the champion of the Midlands think twice, and when the really stiffish business came on, Ackers and March were simply ready for anything—including the last judgment!

And this course, too, which March had so skillfully laid out, had in it problematical points by no means to be sneered at. There was the fine open dash of three-quarters of a mile in the fair-way, with only enough in the way of jumps to limber up the mounts; then came the long, broad turn, not sharp enough to check the pace, but which brought the field about in a glorious sweep into the uphill stretch, with one side just as good as the other, and every man standing a chance as good as another's for reaching the troubles together.

And then the troubles! That awful, heretical, deadly liverpool, against which Lord Bertie had protested in the name of the implied widows and orphans, and which would not have been permitted by the stewards at any other hunt outside of Bedlam; the two stone fences with short, jerky jumps on the further side; the four-rail, innocent-looking fence—until one saw that the stubby hurdle just beyond must be negotiated with no ghost of a show for a horse to recover, but must be taken from the almost standstill; and lastly the ditch at the top of the hill—an innocuous ha-ha, since it had not a fence, but which was an ugly enough proposition in all conscience, since neither rider nor horse could see it until fairly upon it. Added to all this was the fact that his lordship began to realize that he was forty-five! Altogether, therefore, Lord Bertie's dreams on the night before the great Craigie steeplechase were not as the dreams of children, sweet and free from care.

Nor was that memorable night one wholly free from cares to the Junior Gentlemen Riders. When Monty Pell reported what Lord Bertie had said to him about the invisible fences in ha-ha ditches, and the hallucination relating thereto in the mind human and animal, he was promptly placed in a position from which no way of escape was possible, save by his expressing his desire

to pay for the drinks. When this had been done, and each member of the Gentlemen Riders had bestowed a suitable epithet upon him—ranging from "Reuben" to "Willie, the Good Thing"—the Gentlemen went into committee of the whole for the purpose of devising ways and means for instituting instant reprisals against the major and Lord Bertie, the latter more particularly.

In the still watches of the night, while the unsuspecting were enjoying the little dinner dance at "Grantby Hall," the sub-committee, comprising Monty Pell and Harry Grantby and Vernon Post, made its way into the recesses of "The Paddock" woods, whence the plotters emerged finally at the top of the hill where was the fenceless ha-ha of the steeplechase course. They dismounted and with considerable difficulty dragged two heavy hurdles from the adjoining field, which they succeeded in placing along the bottom of the ditch, thus making it a ha-ha as ha-has were before that act of Parliament abolished the fences in the reign of Edward IV. Then, as the moon was full and madness at its height, they remounted and flew the ha-ha back and forth a number of times, neither the horses nor themselves disturbed by reality, as they might have been by the ha-ha seen by the mind's eye solely. And they went home, and the night wore on, and the day broke, and the great Craigie steeplechase was now at hand.

"You don't think, my lord, do you, that my horse will have any trouble at that beastly ha-ha up on the hill to-day? You see, this is my first real run, and I'm not afraid of anything else; but, by Jove! I confess I don't altogether like the idea that Tancred may get gay and see things in that blooming ha-ha, you know," said Monty, as he sat in his saddle and watched Lord Bertie examining his girth and stirrups and bridle with minuteness.

"Never fear, my dear boy," replied Lord Bertie, "for American-bred horses, having never seen a ha-ha, are not troubled by the superstition as they are in England, don't you know. Good luck!"

He said this so heartily that Monty

almost repented, but all was bustle and movement about the paddock, where the weighing in and other preliminaries were being attended to, so he rode off to see what it was that Mrs. Pell was trying to signal to him from the top of the drag. The betting was unusually heavy, with Lord Bertie a strong favorite, and March and Ackers dividing second choice.

After considerable delay, owing to some points raised by the Meadowbrook contingent—as to the placing of the flags on the second stone fence too far to one side from the natural course—everything was ready, and they were off!

From the very word, Lord Bertie showed his superb generalship, securing the slender margin of advantage as to place, and holding just enough of a lead over the major and Ackers to prevent them from cutting him off at the first rather short turn. March had struck a snag at the get-away, Mephisto having reared half a second before the go; but both he and Babcock, of Philadelphia, soon began to give Lord Bertie something to think about. It was a splendid dash across the green, with the field well bunched and the far-off goal in each man's hope. Even beyond the broad, great sweeping curve, they held together as nobody thought that some of them could; for they forgot that, changing the riders, not a horse of them all but could have won. And from the drag, with the Gentlemen Riders atop, the wonder was seen that Monty Pell flew the first stone fence nose and nose with Lord Bertie—a good half length ahead of the next! Then came a shuffle of places, and the field disappeared behind the shoulder of Burnside Hill; and when they came tearing into view again the major was leading, with March and two Meadowbrook chaps disputing Lord Bertie's pretenses as second—and still Monty rode with the four who vied to be third. But then came the troubles.

The major resigned just this side of the liverpool, soberly surrendering the honor of essaying that work of delirium at the present pace to Ackers, himself

falling back and taking the triple threat in more rational fashion, as did also Lord Bertie and Bentley, the Westchester crack. But March clung like fate to the side of Ackers, with young Monty Pell so close that March could hear the deep breath of his horse.

The liverpool terminated the career of fully one-third of the starters, and as the field forged up the heavy grade for the last real work before the thrill of the finish, it was plain that many of those who had negotiated it had done so with the last ounce of nerve, and were now transacting business on borrowed capital at a ruinous rate of interest. There were by this time three races being run. Well away to the fore Lord Bertie and March—Ackers had overdrawn his account from the start and was all in—were keeping the betting furious, with young Monty Pell—confound the kid! would he never break his infernal impudent young head!—lying flat on Tancred's neck and letting that worthy give palpable proof that he was own brother to Mephisto, by sniffing not more than an inch behind him.

Behind these, at something like twenty yards, came as well aligned as a rank of the Guards, Ackers and Peabody and ten or twelve more, the cream of the visitors and Norbury lights; and then—at no matter what distance back—came all the others who also ran.

Up the grade forged the on-rushing, panting, delirious horses, the sweating and dust-begrimed men, tense of muscle and drawn of face—up the heavy grade which meant, once reached, only one ditch jump—an easy one, too—and then the dead level, straight on, unimpeded home stretch—and glory!

Lord Bertie availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the enforced slackening of the pace, to make observations. March was evidently nearing his end, and if only that last ditch were taken abreast of him, his lordship felt confident that he could at last let Nugat have his head, and pull away from Mephisto. Lord Arthur, as fresh as an Irish strawberry in a June morning, was a greater sorrow—but to lose to him would not

be a transatlantic ignominy at all events. And then there was this beastly, insufferable young idiot, Monty Pell, who was as fresh as the day he was born—a day so recent that there was positive nausea in the thought of being done by the young American imp. But, pshaw! it was only a question of reaching the stretch—a tickle with the leather on Nugat's flank, a rise in the stirrups, a slight shaking out of the rein—and Monty the Kid would be forgotten.

Up the grade went they so, with the followers holding unchanged their own. And now for the ditch and the fling and the finish!

The lip of the hill hid the edge of the gully, but Lord Bertie had carefully measured the distance—two strides from the top, and then the persuader that would bring Nugat's muscles into a bunch, a gentle lean forward—and over we are! March also took observations. Ignoring young Pell and Lord Arthur—his race was apparently with Lord Bertie only—he watched the latter's face as they swung back and forth with the heave of their horses as they climbed the interminable, killing ascent, and he saw that his lordship was calm, but so pale that he feared he might reel—men will reel from the saddle, you know, when the blood has been drawn to the lungs from the brain—and Lord Arthur, too, seemed to be watching his brother with some such anxiety. Only Monty was perfectly happy.

Thank Heaven! five more of these plunges, and the hilltop is here! At the instant that the riders intimated to their still unsuspecting mounts that a jump was demanded, March, by a trick of the wrist, solicited and obtained a spurt which sent him to the top half a length ahead of Lord Arthur. Monty was second, and Lord Arthur next to see the ditch and rise to fly it. Then a great wonder befell. Lord Bertie's paleness had increased, and by the time he had made the last uphill lunge things were swimming before his eyes, and at that precise instant he caught sight of the ditch—and, lo! it had become a ha-ha with a five-rail fence, contrary to act of Parliament and reason!

Only on the day before he had run over the course, and there was certainly no fence in the ditch. March and Lord Arthur and that beastly young American terror had just flown it in a way that showed they had not seen the phantom ha-ha. Nugat also seemed to be blind to it. But there it was! There was no time for speculation, nor was it a theory as to how it got there, but a situation that confronted him—a jolly rum situation, too, with his nerves on strike and bright dots of red and blue flame floating through the devilish queer blackness that had so strangely filled the sunshine. The psychological moment was at hand!

Nugat had looked for the well-known persuader the instant that he had caught sight of the ditch, and had bunched the quivering muscles in his flank for the joyous flight. But in that instant Lord Bertie's mind experienced the lightning-like rush of memory which drowning men tell us they feel. He reviewed the history of the ha-ha from its first inception in the reign of Edward IV., through its suppression by act of Parliament after poor Baron de Brake broke his neck on one, and down to the current belief that a ghost fence is still seen at the bottom of ditches by horses and sheep and men and—donkeys! Yes! He had explained it all to that unthinkable young Monty fellow, and now here he himself was suddenly confronted by the phantom!

The dots of incandescent red and blue swimming through the giddy blackness now began to whirl about in a fearful way. Nugat, checked at the very instant that his tension for the leap was greatest, wavered, reared and then plunged with a sickening roll over into the ditch.

Lord Arthur, glancing over his shoulder to see how his brother had negotiated the last threat, was just in time to see the spill, and he was dragging the unconscious man out of the way before the first of the following flashes of hoof and glistening shoe shot across the ha-ha.

March won by a nostril over Monty Pell, but all interest in the result was lost when from the drags and the pad-

dock fence and the saddles of those who came up now was seen Lord Bertie's decidedly nasty fall. But Dr. Brathwaite pronounced it nothing more than a shake-up, and in a few minutes Lord Bertie opened his eyes and started up, evidently anxious to remount and make a desperate try at the finish. Monty ignored the shouts of the Junior Gentlemen Riders, and slunk away behind the row of coaches, where he was shedding remorseful tears when the major—a great hand at locating cases of need, the major—when the major discovered him and assured him that Lord Bertie's death was not imminent.

"But I say, you know," explained Lord Bertie, when they were all lunching with March, "I thought I saw a fence, don't you know, in the bottom of the beastly ditch, don't you know. Deucedly unpleasant, you know, seeing things that aren't there, you know. And, by Jove! I wonder if I told those kids the truth without meaning to? Never heard of the giddy phantom ha-ha until I told Monty about it. Rum, damn it, devilish ugly, I tell you!"

"The American youth is fearfully and wonderfully made," remarked the major, quietly—and a great light broke upon Lord Bertie.

"Monty, you young devil, come here," he said, lifting himself on his elbow from the lounge.

Monty, the young devil, came.

"What do you know about this blooming business?" asked Lord Bertie, while the rest roared.

"Well, you see, my lord," stammered Monty, "the fellows all said that you were kidding me when you told me about ha-has, and it was up to me to—"

"Oh, I say," broke in Lord Bertie, turning to the others, "I've half a mind that the whole thing was a joke, don't you know, and that these young Indians really did put a fence there. Well, as soon as I am fit again I'll have a look at that blooming ha-ha, and if there is a fence in it, why, then I'll—"

"Pay for the drinks?" smiled Monty, cherubically.



# THE SOCIAL SIDE OF CHICAGO\*

IN WHICH A LEADER OF SOCIETY  
TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT IT



HO constitute society in Chicago? This is a puzzling question, one most difficult to find a satisfactory answer for.

Society, as the term is known in London, Paris, Berlin, Washington, even in some of our Southern cities, such as Baltimore, does not exist in Chicago. Society, as signifying one prominent set of people who entertain each other, who set the pace, as it were, for such entertaining, for the style of dress; whose dictates are respected as to who shall and who shall not be invited to social functions—such a set of people, found in almost all great cities, does not exist in Chicago. Perhaps it never will. If you will substitute "social life" for the word "society," I will say that there are as pleasant forms of that life in this city as in any with which I am acquainted.

People who read the society columns of the Sunday papers will not agree with me, probably; but, in spite of that column, I feel that I am right, and it is the natural and inevitable result of the building up of such a city as Chicago—which practically represents the latest phase of industrial democracy. All sorts and conditions of people, conservative and radical, join in its make-up.

Many of the early settlers in Chicago came from small New England towns, and they retained many of the prejudices and all the manner of life of rural New

England. They lived simply; when they became wealthy, they moved into a larger house. They kept few servants, and gave a solemn reception to their friends once a year. They went to church twice on Sundays and on Wednesday evenings. The women made and returned calls very punctiliously. This was the typical social life of early Chicago among the Americans, who, by the way, held themselves entirely aloof from foreigners, as they called everyone who was not born in America. At the same time, some of the most delightful and certainly most interesting men were among the foreign population in those early days—men well known in their own country, some of the men of '48—but the Chicago of that date was too provincial to make the distinction. While in professional and business life the Americans and foreigners have sustained very pleasant relations, in social life they do not mix well. Even the wealthy Hebrews, who take a prominent part in London and Continental society, do not go into American circles, except in New York. They have a gay social life, but it is composed of those of their own race.

Upon occasions like the visit of Prince Henry, the Germans and Americans of Chicago join together in social entertainment. But the citizens of German extraction have a charming social life of their own. They entertain constantly, spend more money than do the Ameri-

\* This is the last in a series of important articles on social life in American cities. Articles on the social side of New York, Boston, St. Louis, Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco and Washington have appeared respectively in the June, July, August, September, October, November and December numbers. Articles on various phases of American society, and an article comparing social phenomena in England and America, will follow.—THE EDITORS.

cans, and have more fun. There is a large German society, and among them are many cultured and charming people, but it is composed almost exclusively of Germans and their children, and is divided into sets, all more or less exclusive. The next generation, however, will change all this. The American and German-American families have commenced to intermarry in Chicago, and all over the West. That will settle the question of social life, and bring a very good influence with it—what the Germans call "*gemüthlichkeit*."

Of Englishmen, there are a large number resident in Chicago, and they are, with the women, the pets of what is supposed to constitute Chicago society. The young Briton has but to come on the scene, and sing "I am an Englishman," and he conquers. Some are charming, sincere and well bred; some are disagreeable and aggressive, the worst type of middle-class Englishmen with money, who would not be received in good society at home. But in Chicago society the question is his nationality, not his quality. He may even snub the best-born and the best-bred American citizen. The ambition of all rich Americans is to be a success in London, and even to know the Englishmen who come to Chicago puts one in training, as it were, for London.

In justice, it may be said here, however, that we have had our revenge. We have sent over several social leaders to London who were quite unknown here, or, if known, not appreciated; but in London they have been found to be delightful, and they are, according to the newspapers, the observed of all observers. It is quite a puzzle to know on what lines English society is organized when we read the triumphs of certain American women over there. On this subject, I remember what a very brilliant and cultivated man, a college professor, once said to me: "We like Englishmen when they come over here, and we would like English women also if they would come, and they like Americans in England—the less conventional the better—because, as the song says, 'they are just a little different from the

others that I know.' This difference is the charm of internationalism. Most of us go into society, as it is called, because we are always hoping to find some one different. It is foolish to say that Americans are 'toadies' because they like to meet dukes, lords and literary celebrities. They expect to be amused by the difference—and the same rule applies to Americans in Europe."

There is one feature of our Chicago social life which I believe from observation we carry to a greater extent than do the other cities. I may call it a yearly feature, and it takes the city as a sort of autumn fever. I mean "débutante teas"—when parents introduce their daughters to their friends. The amusing part of it is that in not a few cases it is the début of the parents as well. The daughter has been to a fashionable day or boarding school, and has made friends. As they are young and loyal, they persuade their mothers to go to the coming-out tea, and thus the girl gets a fair social start. By the next season, many of these débutantes have disappeared—no one stops to ask where. For it takes a genius to sustain oneself and one's family at so tender an age in society. But the practice demonstrates the youth and good courage of the city. The people are glad to give anyone a chance, and if they can keep it, so much the better. They are welcome to it.

The distinction accorded in most cities to the legal profession, and, indeed, the professional class in general—including the clergy—is entirely lacking in Chicago. To be a professional lawyer, a judge, gives the man among men a certain status, but confers no privileges upon his wife or children. In the earlier days of Chicago, this was not so, however. There were then professional men and their families who were social leaders, and they helped to build the city up. Their names, even, are now forgotten.

The truth of the matter is, perhaps, that the children of the first settlers in Chicago were in few instances equal to the occasion; I mean that set of men and women from the Eastern and Southern States who came here in the

early days to look after Eastern interests, or to make their own fortunes. They were, in many instances, typical of the best we have in this country. When Chicago surprised its citizens by its phenomenal and cosmopolitan growth, and new people came into social life who had made fortunes and pushed to the front, the children of the settlers of early Chicago, who inherited the conservative tendencies of their fathers without the need for their fathers' initiative, gradually withdrew more or less from social life, leaving it to the newcomers to set the pace. Ultimately, many of them went East to live, thereby missing a great opportunity to assist in developing the social life of a young city on conservative lines.

But there is one valuable influence that remains from that set of people, and that is the moral tone which prevails in Chicago social life. Through some misrepresentation of the actual facts, largely brought about by the sensational newspapers, people abroad represent Chicago as a dissipated, reckless city; but the sex morals of social life are quite up to the standard of our best representative cities, in spite of one or two notorious examples to the contrary—of which much has been made, but which really signify little. Divorce is very rare among people of good social standing.

On the other hand, there is a class who have lately acquired large wealth. They have no traditions and no training in the use of money, so they spend. That is all they can do with it. The result is unfortunate for the men and fatal for the women. In a new city like ours we have that class. You see them at large, general functions in gorgeous array. They give elaborate suppers after the theater or the opera at the Annex. They rarely contribute to civic or philanthropic movements, keeping their money for show, unless it is a fashionable charity concert or a *bal poudre*.

Three-fourths of the people to be met at the Annex after the opera or the Horse Show, so-called prominent people, do not represent the highest type of Chicago society. But, on the lists of contributors to the numerous charities

and social causes of the city are to be found the names of all the best in Chicago social life—those who are the real thing—the people who have the good of the city at heart.

Leaving out the class spoken of above, which, after all, is a small one, there is almost no ostentatious spending of money, as the people of the largest fortunes live very simply. There are, of course, certain women—always women—who wish to know certain people and think to do so by lavish display and much entertaining; but in no city of the world do such methods have less effect. The person is ignored in a perfectly good-natured way, and with an amused cynicism which testifies to the saving sense of humor of the community. On the porch of a fashionable country club were seated two women, one an old resident of the city, noted for her gracious consideration for others, the other a very recent member of the club. An old-fashioned carriage stopped at the door, and a very quietly dressed woman came up the steps. The recent member said: "Really, the membership committee should be more careful. Look at that person!" The older woman did not reply, as she wished to enjoy the look of surprise of the speaker as they witnessed the cordial welcome which "the person" received from the exclusive set whose good will she was so anxious to win. "The person" was the unmarried daughter of a man who in his lifetime was one of the most honored men in the country, and whose family was of international reputation.

The writer was once seated at a Thomas concert behind two young women, who, before their marriage into well-known families, had been neither seen nor heard of. A lady of middle age passed down the aisle. She was the wife of a man prominent in politics, and she herself was a social leader in Washington. One of the women said: "I wonder who that woman is. I saw her with Mrs. — the other day." "Oh, she's some poor relation," replied the other.

It is made a reproach to us that we have a large number of non-resident

citizens, but New York has as many. Our people go East to live—New Yorkers go to Europe; ours build fine houses in New York, in which they often live in regal solitude, for it is hard to make friends after passing middle life. I do not think that it is always because they dislike Chicago that they leave it, but they tire of the constantly changing conditions which prevail here. As they grow old they want to live in settled conditions. This they find in Eastern cities, where, at least, they can take things as they find them and feel no responsibility about it.

That is the fatiguing thing about Chicago society—its constant change. The names of the prominent people in society thirty years or so ago are, with a few exceptions, no longer heard. One's neighbors, acquaintances and friends are constantly traveling, always moving. You no sooner get them settled in your calling book than you find they have moved from the West Side to The Virginia, on the North, and the next step is to the Lake Shore Drive. And so it goes. It hardly seems worth while to call on new people. They will go off or move higher before you can make a second call. One used to feel sure of seeing some of one's acquaintances at the Thomas concerts, but it is no longer so.

Chicago is the city for youth without family traditions. Here such people are in their element and have a fair field. Not all of them can keep it, however. I can recall, indeed, several young men and women who have come here, usually from the East, and have gayly dictated terms to Chicago, which—for a time—seemed to take them at their own valuation; but, without knowing when or how, these people disappeared and were seen no more. And there is a reason for this. In a community which has a social standard, such people would never assert themselves. It is because we in Chicago have no standard that they have a brief reign.

Woman is undoubtedly the dominant element in the social life of Chicago, more so, perhaps, than in that of any other American city. The absorption of

men in business is the *raison d'être*—because men in this city are occupied in building up new enterprises, and have neither time nor inclination to devote to outside matters. The wives of some of the best-known men in the professions and in business take no part in social affairs, and the career of their husbands is thus limited on the social side. These men are to the front on all civic occasions when men have the conduct of affairs, but when women are in the lead, their wives' names do not appear among the ever present list of patronesses.

On the other hand, one is surprised when reading over the names of the well-known young matrons to see how many owe their success entirely to their own exertions, quite apart from any reflected glory from their husbands. All social life in Chicago has the feminine—not to say feminized—atmosphere. "Women, women everywhere"—intelligent, unconventional and charming, but all their charm fails to tempt the Chicago man from his business, his club and his fellow *men*. The women appear to enjoy their Adamless Eden, and rush—no other term is appropriate—from one entertainment to another. A clever French woman who was visiting in the city, declared: "There were no husbands—that the charming daughters were a proof that once on a time a father existed, but they were all dead." Certainly this is the impression made on a woman visitor.

At the same time, we have no one set of women who can take Chicago society in hand and bring it into order, and so create a standard. It is a fine thing for a city when the older inhabitants keep a firm grasp on social conditions, as certain sets have done in Boston and Philadelphia. Even New York has such a set of women. Chicago needs discipline in her social life, especially her young people need it. There is a lack of form creeping in which is fatal to good society. There should be a certain standard. People should not be so hastily taken up, and perhaps so hastily dropped. Our social life has been left without direction, and it is feeling the results of misdirected energy. Those

who are capable of leading stand on one side, and we are "young" to a painful degree. We allow men and women to get their social training in social life, so, instead of contributing to it, they are sapping it, and it is difficult to find a remedy. There is one gracious, beautiful and talented woman who could, if she would, be the city's social autocrat, but she has never reached out her hand for her crown which still hangs suspended over her lovely head. It is doubtful if she will ever do so, as she loves her liberty and well knows how onerous are the duties of social leadership. Several women are the centers of small coteries which are so limited that, were they to venture outside their social domain, they would be met by frank amusement. Chicago still awaits, and may never find, a woman strong, beautiful and kind enough to lead her social forces. In the meantime, the city rushes gayly on, unled and socially undisciplined.

As has been intimated, ten or fifteen years ago, there was a real society in Chicago, led by women admirably fitted for their task. Several of these leaders died—notably Mrs. William E. Doggett, whose services on intellectual and social lines to Chicago can never be overestimated. Several went East to live, several practically retired from society, which was thus left to the guidance of untried women. The few of this set who still entertain are absent from the city so much that their influence has waned. One cause for the disintegration of society in Chicago was the Columbian Exposition, during which the citizens entertained so much that, at its close, a natural reaction took place. The panic was also a factor, and certain prominent houses were closed and are now only opened at rare intervals. The growing love for the country and for out of door life has an effect on society, as it often takes the best class of people away from the city. Many families now leave in early May and do not return until November. In February and March they go to California or South—in both places during the season there is a large Chicago contingent. Thus, their

stay in town is shorter each season, and their interest in its social life is less and less. This is especially true of the younger married women who go out into the country to live while the children are young and who identify themselves with the interests of the rural community in which they live.

Chicago also lacks several things which go to make up a successful social life. One is a walk or drive which is fashionable. No one who recalls the part which the Champs Elysées in Paris, Hyde Park in London, Fifth Avenue in New York, have played in the society life of these places can realize this lack in Chicago. The Lake Shore is the most beautiful public promenade in the world, but only the North Side can use it.

Automobiling, which is the favorite amusement of Chicago, is not conducive to sociability, as the rate of speed does not allow of recognition in passing, and the dust and dirt created by the rapid motion prohibit handsome dressing. There is no city where this form of amusement is so general, and when one sees the long files of automobiles on the boulevards or the Lake Shore filled with prosperous-looking people, one has a great respect for the finances of a city which can support such an array of expensive establishments.

The city has few good restaurants, for the reason that society has not the habit, as New Yorkers have, of dining downtown. There are one or two where a good dinner can be had, but only one is fashionable and that only for suppers.

There is quite a large number of society people who remain in town all summer since automobiling came into fashion. They go for dinner to the Saddle and Circle on the Lake Shore, or to some of the numerous German gardens, which are a pleasant feature of summer life. At many of them there is always good music, and the cooking is good, also.

Many Chicago people take houses in the East for the summer, and some have houses in New England. They rarely go to Newport, but to Maine or the north shore of Massachusetts. Wisconsin

sin and Northern Michigan are crowded with "resorters," as they are called; Harbor Point and Charlevoix being the favorite places. Some own their cottages, and others only rent them for the season, but the tendency is to return, year after year, to the same place. Lake Geneva, one of the most beautiful places in the country, is practically a Chicago resort, and has charming summer society. From the city up to Waukegan on the North Shore is a continuous line of towns and villages, the homes of Chicago people. There are numerous country clubs and golf clubs within easy reach of the city, each with its special set of frequenters—the Chicago Golf Club, Ontwensia, Glenview and Midlothian are the four most popular.

The American Derby always brings a crowd of gay, well-dressed people to the city. Washington Park Club, where the races are held, is admirably adapted for the purpose, and shows off the ladies' fine clothes. The pretty lawn in front of the club house is a good setting for the gay colors. The drive to Washington Park from the boulevards and through South Park, at its loveliest in June, is not equaled by any of the foreign race courses.

One of the elaborate functions to which everyone goes is the annual Horse Show, and it is a rare sight. While Chicago is well represented in the boxes, the surrounding cities send large parties of nice-looking people, and the *tout ensemble* is really brilliant.

The Thomas concerts call out during the season on Friday afternoons and Saturday nights a most representative gathering. These concerts are a distinct feature of the city's social life. The theaters are always crowded, but it is

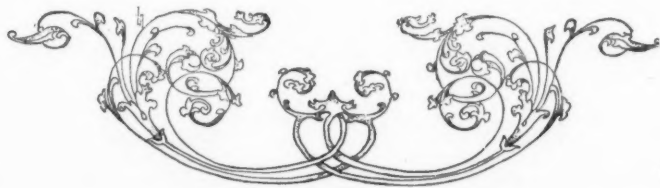
only when some favorite appears or on some special occasion that going to the theater becomes a social affair.

As I said in the beginning, "society," as understood in older cities, does not exist in Chicago. After all, the city stands for the last word spoken in industrial democracy, and it is the vanguard of economic development. These conditions have a powerful influence on its social life, and it may be that there will be less cohesion and that each group in the future will, to a certain extent, become a law unto itself.

There are certain signs which point in this direction. The chief one is that in a city which is growing so rapidly, decentralization is inevitable. People no longer care as they used to do for social recognition, for their life is full of interesting things; and, above all, Chicago is remarkably independent in its judgment, and will only be led where it wishes to go. It resents the assumption of anyone who would be a leader, and leadership must be an acknowledged principle if there is to be a social standard. The city loses much by this lack of leadership, but it is safe to say that few realize the loss, and thus go on their way, if not rejoicing, at least indifferent.

Perhaps the strongest influence to-day on social lines is the University of Chicago, and the presence of some of the best-known men of the country must ultimately bring somewhat of the university spirit into the social life of the city.

After all is said, Chicago will hold her own. She may select other ways and other ideals for her social life, but she will, above all, please herself, and those who love her can only hope that she will choose wisely.





# THE MASTER HAND

By Kilbourne Cowles



ROBERT HADLEY stood at the door of Anne Broughton's studio.

"*Entrez*," was the response to his quick, double knock. As he entered the room, which was Anne's home and workshop, he noticed that it was in a state of unusual disorder. Notwithstanding that its occupant ate, slept and painted in this one little apartment, she had a talent for keeping it exquisitely neat, that Hadley thought one of her most feminine charms. There were other artists in the building who lived and worked in one room, but none who did it with such grace as Anne.

The corner reserved for cooking and eating had not been touched since her simple breakfast of coffee and rolls. In the middle of the floor were scattered pen and ink drawings, big poster designs in broad water-color washes and several oil sketches of outdoor scenes. Robert stepped over and around this medley as best he could and advanced toward Anne, who nodded but did not look up from her easel.

"What is it, Anne? What is it going to be? You paint as if you were bewitched."

"Perhaps I am. I want to lay on a bit more color while the light lasts, then I'll tell you."

The girl worked steadily on, and Robert watched her in silence until the shadows of dusk pervaded the room; then, as she laid down her brushes, she sighed.

"Aren't you going to have a model?" he asked.

"No; unless I could find some one

who comes up to my ideal, I would rather work by my dreams. I might have to search for months before I could find a model to fit the character I have in mind. Oh, Bob, I believe that my chance has come! I was looking through my sketches this morning, hunting for a suggestion for another one of those beastly booklet designs, which have meant meat and drink to me all winter, when an idea so large and beautiful came that I almost staggered before it. I took this old canvas that I've painted over so many times, and went to work without stopping to pick up and straighten that litter. I think I'll sweep it all into the corner, and perhaps I'll never have to touch it again." Rising from her chair, she stretched her tired arms above her head. Hadley thought that if she could only reproduce herself on the canvas the picture would surpass any dream.

"Shall I make you some tea?" she asked.

"No, not to-night, thank you. Come for a walk. You need the exercise and so do I, and we will get our tea at Rhinehart's."

"But I——"

"Don't be foolish, Anne. Come along. You may pay half if that will make you any happier."

"I'm too tired to quarrel," she laughed, and, going behind the screen, scrubbed the paint and charcoal off her hands. Then, after smoothing her hair, she put on her hat and jacket. As they walked down the steps of the studio building, Hadley observed that it was the same jacket she had worn so much in Paris. They had both thought it very *chic* then, and it still had an "air,"

although the buttonholes were frayed and it was shiny in spots.

Anne saw him looking at it. "If my dream comes true, I may have a new one," she said, with one of her rare smiles.

"But it won't be as dear to me as this." It was almost dark, and he touched her sleeve gently. "Promise me that whatever happens you'll wear this sometimes, no matter what comes."

"More likely in spite of what comes," answered Anne, with just a shade of bitterness in her tone.

"Oh, Anne, how I wish that——"

"Did you want me to go with you?" she asked, almost sternly, stopping abruptly.

"Yes, of course. Forgive me. I forget sometimes, and you are hard, Anne, hard. I wonder that a woman can be so hard."

"Don't scold me, Robert. I have such a happy dream to-night that I don't wish to think of anything else."

"Are you going to share it with me?"

"As much as I can. Some of it is too vague and deep to tell. But I think that I see the light at last. You know I just told you that I thought my chance had come. Don't be startled, Bob, or say anything to discourage me, for it won't do any good. I am bound to try for the Gridely prize. Did you know that the competition had been opened to women? I saw it in the morning paper, and I knew then that my opportunity had come. If I don't succeed I'll—I'll give up, Bob, and paint menu cards all the rest of my life." She laughed hysterically.

"Or come to me," he ventured.

"Or go to you," she answered; "if you want a disappointed woman—a failure."

He knew that it would be useless to tell her that it was success for her just to live.

"But, Bob, I am sure to succeed. I never felt this way before. It must be a premonition. The picture is before me so plain that I can't fail to set it down right, can I? It came to me like an illumination. I don't have to ask

myself whether I shall have it this way or that. All I have to do is to paint it as I see it in my mind. It seemed to me to-day that I couldn't paint fast enough; the picture came crowding off the end of my brush. I am in a fever for to-morrow to come that I may begin again. I always knew that some time my turn would come. That was why I worked patiently on pot-boiling cards and posters that I hated, that is why I ate prunes instead of oranges without complaining, that is why I don't mind wearing this shabby jacket and scuffed-out shoes. Don't wince, Bob. I don't need pity, but I do crave sympathy. I want to feel that you believe in me, too. Don't let my courage fail. If I seem to limp by the wayside before the picture is done, be my crutch, and I'll bless you, Bob. I can't promise more. Don't ask me to, Robert."

"You'll win, Anne, I know it. It's a wonderful thing you are undertaking, but I am sure that you will succeed. You cannot fail, for your whole heart is in it." If there was a bitter note in his voice she did not hear it.

"Thank you, Bob." Her own voice was tense, and he knew that he had not disappointed her.

"But, Anne, you must realize what you are doing. Do you know that you'll have to compete with the very best talent in the town? There are to be but six pictures entered in the competition. A committee of three outside artists will visit the studios of those who wish to compete, and decide which are eligible. So you see it is a double competition. Your picture will be judged twice."

"I know all that, but nothing could discourage me now. Not even if you, yourself, told me there was no hope. I should still try. Think what it will mean to me, to feel that I have put a soul onto a canvas that people will realize and feel as a living, vital thing that speaks for itself. It isn't the money that I care so much for, though Heaven knows I need it, but it's the stimulus—the breath of life that will keep me from dull despair."

"Don't talk so, Anne. You frighten

me. Winning or losing this prize will not, can not, change the world for you. There will be other chances. If you don't succeed now, victory will come later."

"Then you don't believe in me, after all. You were just soothing a tired child a few minutes ago, when you said that I would succeed. I am not a baby to be pacified. You have no right to blow hot and cold with me. If you think I'll fail it is not your fault. You can't help what you think. But, Robert, be honest with me. Say what you mean, and if it is failure, all right; I can bear it. I know in my heart that I will succeed, but if you think that I will not, stay away from me until all is over. Until we know the verdict, I want to be left to my dream of success—of happiness."

"You wrong me, Anne. You don't understand me. I believe that you will win, that you will paint the picture of the year. But I am not so carried away with the frenzy of enthusiasm that is sweeping you along, but that I think it wise to be prepared for whatever comes. There are other things in life than pictures. Art is not all."

"Forgive me. I can't be reasonable to-night. I don't want any 'if' or 'perhaps.' It must all be certainty. But never mind, Bob, you are dear and patient, and though you sometimes paint like an inspired angel, you are not cursed with the artistic temperament. I wonder how such a calm, phlegmatic person as you are can draw anything but rectangles, but you are good for me, even if you do pull me down from the clouds and trample on my dream. I suppose you were sent into my life to curb my spirit and keep me in the work-a-day paths of earth, but I shouldn't know what to do without you, Bob. If you ever marry some goody-good young person who fulfills all your ideas of humdrum life and conventionality, I shall waylay you now and then and make you talk to me as you have so often, so often, in all these years of study, work and play together."

Anne's voice trailed off into a sigh, and Robert answered only by drawing

her arm through his and whistling softly.

"Doesn't this place always remind you of Paris?" asked Anne, as they sat down at one of the bare wooden tables in the rather Bohemian little restaurant.

"Yes, that's the reason we come here," smiled Hadley. "Anything that reminds us of Paris is worth while, because that is where we met."

Anne ignored any sentiment implied in this remark, and said: "Wasn't our meeting absurd?"

"Absurd! It was nothing short of ideal."

"What a wreck I was after a night on the choppiest channel that ever separated England and France. Dissipated were all those halcyon hopes with which I had taken my little all and sailed away from everything and everybody I knew. Paris wasn't the gay place that morning that I had expected. It seemed about the loneliest place in the world."

"It was cold and dreary. Do you remember how we laughed when you asked me if I spoke English, and I replied that it was the only language I could speak?"

"And it turned out that you, too, had just landed."

"And what a joke it was when we found out that we both had the address of the same pension. I suppose the dear old madame, who took care of us so long and so well, never did get it out of her head that we had come there together by arrangement."

"She certainly was amusing," Anne colored at the recollection of the many awkward situations arising from the madame's firm belief that these two *pensionnaires* were bound by some other tie than a love of art and a common country.

"You stood it bravely," said Robert, in answer to her thought. "I wish that we were there this very minute."

"I don't. I want to finish my picture, and even the call of *la belle Paris* isn't strong enough to take me from it now. But a year among the old haunts is part of my dream, Bob. If I win the prize, I shall return to the life over there for a while, anyway."

Hadley had learned caution. He did not utter the wish that came jumping to his lips—that the revisiting of those scenes, made dear by happy student memories, should be together. He only sighed wistfully as he held her jacket for her.

After leaving Anne at the door of her room, Hadley traversed the long hall of the studio building and let himself into his own spacious rooms. He made a light and then stood before a large canvas, on which were the charcoal outlines of a tender, budding figure of a young girl, whose attitude and carefully drawn face already expressed the expectant joy and mysterious hopefulness of glad youth.

"It was a good start. She, too, was a dream-child, but she must not live. I cannot compete with Anne." He looked long and affectionately at the sketch, which he had drawn with such enthusiasm. Then slowly, reluctantly, he raised his hand to erase the lines. It seemed for a second that the wistful eyes appealed to him for mercy, and, shuddering, he dropped his hand at his side. Then, squaring his shoulders and smiling scornfully at his hesitation, he lifted his arm again. "No, I cannot compete with Anne," he said, beneath his breath. "Some day, perhaps, I may paint it for her, but now it must not come between us."

In a moment the graceful, girlish figure, with all its promise of life and love and beauty, was wiped from the canvas, and its creator threw himself into a chair.

"It was hard, but still it wasn't much to do for Anne," he murmured, as he resolutely turned away from the vacant canvas that had held so much of hope and joy for him a few hours earlier, when he had gone to Anne's studio to tell her of the beautiful thought that, wrought into a picture, was to win for him the Gridely prize. "No, it was a little thing to do for Anne," he repeated, after a few minutes, and, turning the key in his studio door, went out again into the night.

"Anne, you are killing yourself," remonstrated Robert, one afternoon when,

as often happened, he dropped into her studio, to watch the progress of the picture. It was "The Picture" to both of them, and they scarcely thought or spoke of anything else when they were together. "You are thin, and I don't like those unnaturally brilliant spots which are burning on your cheeks. You mustn't work so fiercely. You are not only injuring your health, but killing yourself."

"No, not killing myself, just putting all the best of my poor self into the picture. Don't worry about me, Bob. I am as strong as an unbroken colt, and I should be as restless if I attempted to pause one minute before the picture is done. It's coming, isn't it, Robert? Don't you see the idea grow? Does it mean anything to you?"

"It has meant something to me from the start. The very first colors that you laid on with such a lavish stroke glowed with life and motion, and each day's work has brought it nearer perfection. But I'm afraid for you, Anne. You scarcely eat or sleep, and it's sure to tell on you. Now, honest, did you have any lunch to-day? I don't believe that you even nibbled at that Swiss chocolate that used to be your stay in the *atelier*. Now own up."

"I won't own up. It doesn't matter. If I were hungry, I'd eat."

"No, you wouldn't, you'd forget it, and then, when you were almost spent, you'd wonder what made you so weak. I know you. Now you are going to make tea, and I'll contribute some new biscuits that contain all the elements of nutrition. I know they do, for the label says so."

"But it's early to stop work."

"So you refuse me a cup of tea? I would never have believed you so inhospitable."

"Bob, you are a bother. Sometimes I wish you would leave me altogether alone, but I suppose that I should perish if you did. Fill the alcohol lamp, and when I have blocked out this shadow I'll make the tea, though no doubt you could do it better than I. I am sure that you have more domestic qualities."

"That isn't so, and you know it, Miss

Broughton. You are a natural house-keeper, when you are normal."

"But when I'm painting a picture?"

"Then you are—well, you are——"  
Here Hadley whistled expressively.

"Well, if I am as bad as that, I'll have to reform and make the tea at once," laughed the girl, rising from her work. She tidied her hands and hair, and began to arrange the tiny table in her own deft way that her guest always thought most fascinating.

"Robert, I woke last night and cried out the word 'failure.' It was the last part of some hideous dream I had had. It haunted me, but I could not recall it. All I know is that when I awakened that horrible word was on my lips. Do you believe in omens? Do you think it means anything?"

"It means just what I told you a few minutes ago, that you are working dangerously hard. You are overwrought, and it is no wonder that you have the nightmare."

"I am so glad that that is the way you feel about it. Somehow, though I knew it was senseless, that word 'failure' left a dismal impression on my mind, and it has depressed me all day. Oh, Robert, suppose that it should mean something; that my dream of success had just been a chimera that led me into fond avenues of foolish hope. It seems to me that I should never strive again, that I should drift into hopeless mediocrity without an effort to lift myself out of it. The thought is intolerable."

"Drink your tea and don't take yourself so seriously. I am sure that yours will be the prize-winning picture, but even if it should not be, you would not cease trying. The idea is ridiculous; you are too brave. Besides, one picture cannot make or mar you. You are yourself, that is of the most importance; and I know that you will be true to yourself. These biscuits aren't half bad, are they?"

"They are very good, particularly if you touch them up with the cheese. Sometimes I feel, Robert, that you don't know me at all. You think it will be nothing more than a passing disappointment for me to lose, while I know that

my whole heart is wrapped in my picture, and its failure will be the death note to all ambition."

"Thank Heaven I know you better than you know yourself. You talk now like a sixteen-year-old girl. You are a woman, Anne, and you have the courage of——"

"Of my twenty-eight years."

"Of a woman, of the sort that knows how to live and never says 'die.' Here's to the picture, away with all doubts!" Hadley clinked his tea cup against Anne's, and they laughed merrily, though there were tears in the girl's eyes and the man's voice was a bit husky.

At last the day came when Anne sat before the picture with idle brushes in her hand. It was done, but there was no zest of accomplishment. She looked at it with tired eyes. Robert had been in earlier in the day and had advised one or two slight changes, which she had made, rather unwillingly, so jealous was she of even a suggestion that would make the picture less hers. But she realized that she had expended upon it all of herself that she had to give, and she had faith in Hadley's judgment. She had asked for no comments, and he had made none. She did not think it strange that he had volunteered none, for she felt that they both knew that all that could be said had been said; that now all that was left was to wait for the verdict.

As she looked at it the outlines seemed blurred and the colors dulled, and she could scarcely think what it all meant.

"It is not the picture, it is myself that is wrong," she said, as she wearily rose. "Bob is right; I have worked to exhaustion. I am so tired that nothing matters now, not even the picture." She lay down on her couch and tossed restlessly for an hour. Then she went to the easel and arranged a drapery over the picture, without giving it a glance. "I've come to the end of my resources. There is nothing more that I can do. I won't think about it or look at it until the time comes for judgment."

She put on her wraps and went out, wandering through the park aimlessly,

then into the shops, looking at the gay display of spring goods with as much aloofness as if she were not a beautiful woman whom beautiful clothes became. She walked as one in a trance, nothing seemed real to her. The next day she was the same. She went out early in the morning and walked for hours. When she came back, Hadley was waiting for her at her studio door. But she was too tired to talk, and he made the tea.

"Stay at home to-morrow," he begged. "Get one of the girls in the building to come to you."

"I don't want anyone here who doesn't understand, and nobody does but you, Bob. I'll be all right after the committee have been here. They will come to-morrow, I've had word."

"Are you anxious, Anne? Do you dread their coming?"

"No, I don't feel anything. I am dull."

Robert gazed at her with solicitude. This was such a different Anne from the one he had known so long. The old Anne had had her moods, as well as other people, but she had not been listless; she abounded with life.

"Don't think any more about me until to-morrow night. Then come, and I'll tell you whatever there is to tell."

Robert left the room, pausing on the threshold to say: "God bless you, Anne."

"Thanks, Bob. I'm sorry I'm such a stupid thing. I suppose the polite name for my ailment would be brain fag, but I don't believe it's possible." She laughed weakly at her little joke, and Hadley went away cheered with the thought that her condition was merely the result of the tremendous strain to which she had subjected herself. He asked himself what would happen if her picture failed, and he could only shake his head mournfully as he thought: "Poor girl, it would be a sickening disappointment." And, as if to keep up his own courage, he said over and over again: "It will win, it must."

It was with a sinking heart that he presented himself at Anne's door the next evening. It seemed to him that

he could not bear it, if he should find Anne in the depths of grief, as he knew he would if her picture had been refused admission in the competition. He would have done anything in his power to save her from pain, and he knew that there was nothing that he could do; that if the worst happened he would be helpless before her suffering.

Anne's answer to his knock gave him no clew, and, as he stepped into the room, she did not look up from the tea table she was arranging.

"Well?" he asked, in a tone of suppressed eagerness.

"Well," repeated Anne, still looking away from him, "they came, they saw and—and—"

Hadley walked swiftly across the floor, and, going straight to Anne, lifted her averted face in his hand and looked for an instant into her eyes.

"And you conquered! Thank Heaven! Oh, Anne, I'm so glad, so happy, so thankful! What can I say to make you understand how I feel it, dear?"

"I know, Robert. You are always better to me than I deserve. No one could share it with me as you do." Tears trembled on Anne's long lashes, and Hadley felt that she had never been more adorably womanly than at that moment. She withdrew the hand that he had taken, and said with imperative but gentle firmness: "Sit down, Bob, and I'll tell you all about it."

"Robert, when those three men came in I felt as if I hadn't strength to uncover the picture. Actually, my knees knocked together as I walked. I could scarcely lift my hand. But when I drew the curtain aside I was positively stunned. I forgot everything, except that it was my picture, the great effort of my life. I stood before it enraptured, and the thought that the grave and critical committee were beside me entirely escaped my mind. Oh, Rob, it was so much better than I had thought. I didn't care whether it won or not. I knew that it was great, and nothing that anyone could say or think would change that fact. I had to pinch myself to see if it were really I that had done it. It



seemed to be so much a part of me and yet it seemed to have grown and developed since the day I laid aside my brushes. There was just a touch of strangeness about it, and it was so much more living, breathing, than I had remembered it. I fairly trembled before it, and I wonder yet if my mind was quite clear. I can't tell you how odd I felt. It was only when one of the artists said to the others: 'It was painted by a master hand,' that I came back to my normal self. Then he turned to me. 'You have painted a remarkable picture,' he said, 'and I wish to be the first to congratulate you.' He shook my hand and so did the others, and, as they were leaving, the one who had talked the least came back from the door and said that he thought there was no harm in telling me that they had seen all the pictures, and that there was nothing that would touch mine. Mine, Robert, mine! Doesn't it seem too wonderful, too good, to be true? Can it really be so? Have I actually painted a great picture?"

"There seems to be no doubt about it," smiled Robert.

"Come, Bob, let us look at it together." She caught his hand impulsively and drew him toward the easel. "You don't think me childish, do you, to want to gloat over my success?"

"No, of course not, Anne. Let us have all the joy there is in it. Days like this aren't scattered through life very thickly." They paused before the draped picture, and Anne smiled gratefully at Hadley.

"And a first success can happen only once! I am sorry that I didn't know you, years ago, when you achieved yours. I should like to have shared it with you as you are doing with me."

"It would have meant a great deal more."

"You were younger than I when your 'Elaine' won the American Artists' prize, weren't you?"

"Yes, but I began to study earlier than you. It's sweet of you to bring back those old days, Anne, but this is your hour; we mustn't share it with even a thought of anything else. Now show me the *chef d'œuvre*."

Neither of them spoke when first the picture was uncovered. They studied it as earnestly as if it were new to them.

"It is superb," said Robert at last. "I am proud of you, Anne. You have made a glorious picture."

"I suppose the reason that it appears better now is that we were tired of it when it was first done, though my interest didn't seem to flag."

"Nor mine."

"But, Robert, it does look different. Do you think that it could be the effect of the drying of the colors? The values are certainly stronger than they were."

"I never knew that you were so imaginative."

"It isn't imagination, it is observation that makes me think the picture is changed. Look at that shadow behind the figure. It is more clearly defined than it was, and yet it blends exquisitely into the background. It is just the effect I wanted, but couldn't seem to get. If fairies frequented New York apartment buildings, I should say a kindly one had waved her wand over my picture." Anne laughed happily. "I suppose I ought not to complain because I wrought better than I knew."

"No, indeed, you should do nothing for weeks but enjoy your triumph. It's no time for anything but the wildest elation."

Anne was lost in the study of the picture.

"Do you know, Rob," she said, breathlessly, "I am sure that the expression has changed. Don't you see a greater depth in the eyes and a sweeter softness in the mouth?"

"You are full of fancies. I think that you have looked at it until you are bewildered."

"Nonsense! I know what I am talking about. The whole character of the face is changed. I wonder that I didn't recognize the difference at once. It isn't my work, Rob! Some one has altered it. Some one has altered it, I say!"

Hadley made no reply, and continued to gaze fixedly at the picture.

"Why, Rob, there is something about the coloring and the tenderness of the

eyes that makes me think of your 'Dolorosa' that was hung in the Salon the first year we were in Paris."

Hadley remained silent.

"Don't you see what I mean?" Anne continued, impatiently. "The expression of the eyes is like your 'Dolorosa.' Why, Rob, did you change it? Did you touch my picture?" Her voice rose in tones of strong excitement. Hadley tried to speak, but he could not control his voice. He was almost stunned by her fierce resentment, and he sought to evade the passion that flamed from her angry eyes.

"You did! You must have! Now I understand the strangeness that seemed so inexplicable. Oh, Robert, how dared you do it? How could you?"

The agony and reproach in her voice were almost more than the man could endure, and he was tempted to deny her accusation, but she called for the truth and his soul abhorred falsehood.

"Even if you never forgive me, Anne, you will surely do me the justice to believe that I did it because I loved you, loved you so that the thought of disappointment for you was terribly bitter to me."

"But you had no right," Anne cried. "Why should you have touched my picture? It was cruel of you. Why couldn't you have let me stand for myself alone? How did you ever happen to think of such a thing?"

"It wasn't premeditated. I had never even thought of the possibility of adding one stroke to the picture you painted. No one can glory in your success more than I do. No one can love you as well, and yet I fear that no one has ever grieved you so much. I'd gladly cut off my right hand to serve you, as you know, and yet that very hand has wounded you as none other could. Oh, Anne, Anne, I thought you would never have to know!"

"The day after you had finished the picture, I came to your studio and you had gone out, leaving the door ajar. I felt impelled to come in and look at it once more. Then, Anne, when I saw it, I realized that you, in your exhaustion, had just stopped short of your ideal, and that it needed merely an accent here and there to bring it up to your dream. Almost before I knew what I was doing, I had laid on a few touches; and your picture, *years*, Anne, stood out in the fullness of its beauty and strength. You could have done it as well, or better, if you had been fresh. But you had worked beyond your strength, and you couldn't see just the tiny emphasis that it needed."

"It's no longer my picture," moaned Anne.

"It is all yours, Anne. You told the story as I believe that no one else could. I simply punctuated it."

"They said it was painted by a master hand. Whose hand was it?" she demanded.

"Ours, Anne. Yours and mine. Would to God that they might always work together. It is only so that we should do our best."

Without glancing at Hadley or answering a word, Anne stumbled across the room and, leaning against the wall, cried aloud. Her slender figure shook with deep drawn sobs that stabbed Hadley's heart. He longed to gather her into his arms and comfort her, but he dared not go near her.

"If she would only look at me," he thought over and over again. "If she would only look at me, then I should know."

At last the sobs ceased, and for a moment there was silence in the room. Then, as though in answer to the unspoken wish, Anne slowly turned, and her eyes reluctantly met his compelling gaze.

# The Waiting of Palermo's Jacob

By Holman F. Day



THE wind miaouled at the window casings of the Friends' meeting house that First Day. Where the casings were especially loose the blasts howled as though the growling dogs of winter were leaping up outside. At the northwest corner of the boxlike building one tuft of dry brown grass stuck through the snow, and here the wind whistled its loneliest song of all.

Inside, the "silent meeting" was still on. The breaths of a score of persons—all of them old folks—streamed on the frosty air. The barrel stove in the corner was ineffectually red.

The snow came early on the year of this record. It stole a march on sluggards by covering belated beanstalks, and even heaps of potatoes left overnight in the field. Then, over this first coating, winter slashed cold rains and seared the crust with icy winds. Those who listened that night heard the hissing sleet like the sound of soldering irons, and the roar of the gusts as from a furnace's drafts, and saw in the sparkling morning that the land was ice-bound, as though the season had played tinker and had hermetically sealed nature. Then winter kept on—piling a layer of fluff on the crust and puffing upon the unstable covering, till it slid about and tossed itself into windrows, and pinnaced whorls, and ridged pyramids, that were the despair of road breakers, and worried the old folks who harnessed on First Day to go to the Friends' meeting.

Jonas Smiley sat at the head of the meeting as usual. He had occupied the

upper right hand corner of the highest facing seat for more than twenty years. Now he gazed discontentedly on the bleak, bare, cracked walls, and surveyed a ceiling hiatus of laths grinning through broken plaster. The funnel drooled brown stains of creosote on the wall. It was not an inviting interior. One who sat there could understand why the young folks no longer came. In the old days, the Palermo meeting regularly called together more than one hundred families, all speaking the "plain language" of thee and thou. Jonas Smiley looked out on the drifts through the little window panes, whose wavy glass skew-angled the hummocks into mountains of snow, then, grasping the rail with his age speckled hands, drew himself to his feet and began to speak slowly, with the nasal drawl of one who has been long an elder.

"I have talked with the—n-n-h ah—elders, brothers and sisters, Friends of the Palermo meetin', an' it is the opinion that the meetin' house should be—e-e-e n-n-h ah—closed until spring. It is with regret, for meetin's have been held here for many years despite weather or sickness, but the most of us are old an' the Lord has sent the snow in abundance this year. Therefore, by the authority vested in me, I declare the meetin' house closed till spring." He paused.

A man in neat but old-fashioned and faded garb slowly arose, and, crackling his knuckles, stammered: "Will it not be said, Friends, that we are more afraid of snowdrifts than of the displeasure of our Lord God? The unrighteous of the town may have good reason to sneer at

the sturdiness of the Friends of the Palermo meetin'."

One or two worshipers nudged those next them, for the people well understood that the true Quaker spirit did not exist between these two brothers of the meeting. Jonas Smiley frowned.

"Edward Taber," said he, "thee is not one of the elders, and thee has nothin' whatever to do with this matter. I will thank thee to keep still in the meetin'."

"It seems as though I might speak," protested Edward Taber, mildly. "Of all those who come to meeting I live farthest away, an' thee, Jonas Smiley, lives almost across the road from the meetin' house. I—"

The elder rose and chugged a heavy fist in violent gesture. "Sit—down—Edward Taber," he called, and his words seemed to travel along the frosty trail of his breath. The man sighed and sat down. Soon afterward, Elder Jonas gave the signal for dismissal by shaking the hand of the next elder on the facing seat, and the old folks filed slowly out and their old horses went jogging home.

They locked the broad door of the meeting house, hung the key on its rusty nail under the sill, and left the old building to solitude in its drifted triangle at the crossroads. Ruthless winter packed full the pung ruts where the last runners had creaked away, and the wind-borne snow wreaths sealed the windows and the door till one should come in the name of the goddess of spring, as the angel came of old to the sealed tomb in the garden.

Edward Taber stood on the porch after all had gone, and looked across the drifted expanse to where Tryphosa Smiley, daughter of Jonas, was wading through the drifts. He always stood on the porch and watched her until she arrived at her own door. And after she had disappeared, he started away for distant Taber Hill.

Friend Edward Taber was the sole tenant of the gray, element-battered farmhouse on that eminence. His style of housekeeping was known in town as "keepin' bach hall."

The old folks who could recollect well remembered that Edward Taber had

not seemed to be cut out for a bachelor. He was to have married Tryphosa Smiley, so the gossips of that time said, but something had happened to break off the match. Some said that old Jonas was the cause. Some had other reasons to give. But the fact remained that though Edward Taber gazed tenderly on Tryphosa Smiley all through First Day meetings and had a smiling face for all the world, he looked on Jonas Smiley only to glower, and Jonas returned the scowl with interest.

"Aunt Mary," Edward's mother, had died when he was thirty, and for twenty-five years since then he had lived alone in a clutter that couldn't be matched this side of Chaos.

Some people insisted that Edward Taber wasn't just right in his head, though he worked hard, saved his money and was shrewd in a trade. His idiosyncrasy was constant, slow-spoken soliloquy addressed to his farm animals and even to his farming implements. He employed the "plain language" of the rural Quaker with its quaint ungrammaticisms, and was serenely indifferent to the grins of listeners.

On the evening of that snowy and melancholy First Day, Friend Taber plodded slowly into his tie-up, set down his milking stool and confided his troubles as he drummed the streams into the pail:

"Who-ho, there, Rhoda cow! Thee stepped on my foot, bossy. Now thee stand patient and listen while I milk. Would thee think it was well to close the old meetin' house? It was built when my father, Zenas Taber, was young, and it has never been closed on a First Day since then. And there have been winters when all the fences and stone walls were hidden. Ho, so, Rhoda! I never thought I should live to see it closed on a First Day. For that matter, I never thought I should see the plain language passing from the lips of the Friends of Palermo, and the younger women wearin' feathered hats. Tryphosy Smiley never wore a feathered hat in her young days, and I tell thee, Rhoda, she was like unto the rose of

Sharon and even sweet as the lilies beside the brook Kedron. If thee were not a poor cow, thee might go see Tryphosy Smiley in her seat on the facin' row some First Day, and tell me if thee did not think her face under the plain bonnet fairer than the apple blossoms that thee finds each spring hanging over the pasture lane. Not that she is longer young, Rhoda, but her sweetness endures even to this day and generation. Now thee must stand quiet, Rhoda! So, boss! She would have made thee a fine mistress, for she is kind and true and constant of heart. It was her father, Jonas, who said that we might not wed, and her constancy to her home responded even to unjust commands. He said her mother needed her, and she stayed. And when the good mother passed over, her father, Jonas, said he needed her more than ever. He said that the duty to parents is plainly set down. It is not easy to argue with Jonas on the Word. And so she has stayed all these years, though—" He stopped and pondered a moment. Then, swinging his head meditatively, he continued: "Though she did have affection for me, because she said so.

"Yes, she said so, but then—then she began to look the other way, and after that Jonas Smiley, as her father and as one in authority at the head of the meetin', told me that her heart had turned from me to her home. Maybe, maybe, Rhoda. But Jonas Smiley was ever a hard man toward all that love. Perhaps I should have had discourse with her, but in all these years Jonas Smiley is ever close to her at the handshaking time, and it is a marvelous cold eye that he has. Yet, perhaps, I should have had discourse with her, and taken the word from her own lips. Perhaps! Those who are versed in the ways of woman-kind would, no doubt, have done much better than I."

A long silence.

"I think she does not like to see the meetin' house closed, Rhoda. Her heart is in the meetin'. My heart is in the meetin', too. 'Tis the only place now where we may see each other. I would not have thee think, Rhoda, that we

place our love and our hank'rin's to see each other before our respect for the meetin' and our love for the Lord—but it is the only place where we see each other. And, though she does not speak to me, she has looked down on me from the facin' seats many times. Perhaps I should have taken the word from her own—from her own lips."

And muttering the words "from her own lips" many times, he went into his cheerless home.

During the dreary days of that week, he talked to himself as he went about his tasks. Somehow, to him, it seemed a black sort of week. All other weeks during the years had had First Day shining ahead as a beacon. Queer thoughts ran through his mind as he murmured to himself.

"I have sometimes felt," said he, "that perhaps the spirits of the forefathers come to us in the meetin's, and speak the ringin' words that some humbler brothers, standin' to their feet, they hardly knew why, find pourin' from their mouths. The workin's of the Lord are strange, Rhoda, and His mysteries verily pass understandin'. I feel that it is a sin to the dead fathers and mothers of the Palermo meetin' to close our house on First Day. The spirits will look for us and wait for the fires to be kindled, and we shall not be there. And—and the weeks are long, and Tryphosy Smiley will not be there."

At frosty sunrise on the morning of next First Day, he looked out across the fire-spangled drifts and felt a strange homesickness—a longing for the interior of the old meeting house. Those were the only four walls in all those years where he had been permitted to abide for a time with her.

"The worshippers will not be there today," he murmured, "but the Lord will be there—and memories—"

He slowly put on his black meeting suit. It had also served as the funeral garb in which he had followed his mother to the grave. He clumsily fastened to his woolen shirt his yellowed paper collar, and slipped over the neck button the little noose of elastic that held his black bow.

There had been a snowfall on Saturday, and the wind had rioted over it. Through one of his grimy kitchen windows he studied the drifts that ridged the highway down Taber Hill, and, raising his voice in his monotonous soliloquy, decided that white Betsey should not be asked to drag the pung all the long way to the meeting house. With tarred cords he tied his trousers' legs about his rusty brogan shoes at the ankles and started, plunging out into the winter.

There were long drifts where he wallowed until perspiration streamed down into his grizzled beard. There were bleak, icy bare spots that the wind had swept and where the blast was so keen that it seared his eyes. There were hollows where he was obliged to leave the road and climb along the fences and walls. That he kept on showed the mighty fervor that inspired him—a fervor that his simple nature did not analyze.

At last he came through the hemlock woods, whose wind-flung, drooping fronds jocosely tossed snow chunks on his old-fashioned hat. Ahead, framed in the vista of the road-nick between the trees, he saw the fronting gable of the meeting house.

In his companionship with dumb beasts and inanimate objects, Edward Taber seemed to find in every house gable a human countenance, its windows for eyes, its door for a mouth—and the expressions were as individual as those of his neighbors.

The meeting house—a broad, squat and unadorned structure—wore at ordinary times what Friend Taber considered a pious and peaceful demeanor. Now there were icicles hanging from its eaves over the gable windows, like the matted locks of Lunatic Luke of the poor-farm; there were snow whorls heaped above the narrow cornices. The meeting house seemed to wear an ugly scowl, far from Quaker-like. For the first Sabbath morning in seventy-five years, the building hunched there in its triangle, forsaken and sullen. The snow before its door was not marked by foot or runner. Edward Taber stumblingly

swashed his feet through this unmarred expanse.

"Don't thee make sour faces at me," he murmured, shaking his mittened hand at the glowering front. "Edward Taber has come, old friend, and I'll kindle thy fires and brush the icicles off thy front, and then, when thy smile is back once more, I'll sit down in one of thy pews, and we'll have a silent meeting. And then I'll go away refreshed, and thee'll feel better, too, old friend, with a fire to warm thy chill."

He scraped the snow from the threshold, found the big key and unlocked the door. The bolt yeaked angrily, the door yawled on hinges that were downy with frost crystals. The musty rawness of the dim interior chilled him more than the crispness of outside.

The old stove was gorged with creosote-caked ashes, but he patiently dug out the discouraging mess, all the time talking soothingly as to a perverse child. He stripped birch bark from the sticks in the wood house, kindled a blaze, shielding the match between blue and wavering palms, and, bending down on hands and knees, puffed at the draught holes with breath that streamed on the air. Then he sat down by the fire, and began to tell the old pews some of the characteristics of their former occupants, now dead.

The snapping squall of the outer door startled him, and some one came stamping off the snow in the vestibule. Edward Taber, his gaze turned expectantly toward the inner door, said, when it opened:

"How does thee do, Jonas Smiley?"

"Oh, it's thee, is it?" the minister replied, ungraciously. "I saw the chimney smoking, and I came over to make sure that tramps were not making free with the sanctuary. What is thee doing here to-day, Edward Taber?"

"I felt that the old meetin' house would be lonely to be closed this First Day, after all these years, and so I came to stay the usual hour of the meetin' time," explained Edward, bending to crowd another birch stick into the roaring stove.

"More of thy whimsy, eh?" snapped



Elder Jonas. "What should make an empty old shell of timber and plaster lonely? Faw!"

"Yes, timber and plaster—only timber and plaster," said Edward, looking around the bare room meditatively; "but there is something here, Jonas Smiley, that thy callous nature has never discerned. Meat and bone and blood," he cried, pounding his fist against his breast; "yes, only meat and bone and blood! Perhaps thee would say 'Faw!' if I told thee there was anything else in here."

"An odd stick, thee is, Edward Taber," returned Jonas Smiley, looking him over unsympathetically. "But as to thy bein' here—didn't thee remember the word I gave out First Day, week? I said there would be no more meetin's till the ground has opened."

"I heard thee, Jonas Smiley," Taber replied, calmly.

"Then what means this op'nin' of the meetin' house, and burnin' up wood, and disobeyin' the will of the elders?"

"Those may stay away who wish," said Edward. "I came because I felt the call of the Spirit."

"Remember that I still sit at the head of this meetin'," shouted Jonas, now angry and dictatorial. "I have said the meetin' house shall be closed. I command thee, Edward Taber, to put snow on thy fires, and come away and leave the house of the Lord in peace."

Edward folded his hands, coldly blue, and rolled his gnarled thumbs one about the other placidly. "I have worshiped here many years, Jonas Smiley," he said, in his slow monotone, "and my father before me, and——"

"Thy father! Yes, the fiddle man!" snorted Smiley, with the hidebound Quaker's hatred of music. "I remember when he tweedle-deed for the ungodly cockahoops hereabouts to dance."

"But that was when he was young and heedless," returned Edward. "After his call and his conviction, he was as true as thee, Jonas Smiley! I will not have thee slur the dead, and that my father!"

"Well, no matter about it, anyway,"

broke in Jonas, impatiently. "Douse thy fires, and clear out o' here."

"No," said Edward, calmly.

"No?" echoed the astonished minister. "Is thy heart defiant against authority?"

"I am not defiant. I simply say that our family has been true to the meetin', and will continue true. My father helped to build this meetin' house. And if thee doesn't remember, I will tell thee that I hauled and gave this wood that I am burning here to-day. If I of all the others choose to keep First Day holy in this place, that it may not be said outside that the Palermo Quakers are more afraid of winter than of the anger of the slighted Lord, then here I may stay at my will, and if thee comes here to rail and rant and disturb a silent meetin', then I will ask thee to step out."

Jonas Smiley's face was purple with anger. "I am at the head of this meetin'," he bellowed, quivering a fist at the upper facing seat.

"I heard thee when thee said so before, and more decently soft in the house of the Lord," Edward replied, with quiet reproof.

"Will thee obey?" roared Jonas. Then he advanced menacingly. Friend Taber stood up. The long, long thoughts of bitter years were stirring beneath his Quaker calm.

"I fear thee needs to be admonished as to arrogance, Jonas Smiley," he said, sternly. "I obeyed thee once when thee told me not to court thy daughter, Tryphosy. I loved her, Jonas Smiley, more dearly than thy hard, cold heart has power to understand. Thee never could understand. I loved her so dearly that I obeyed thy command, for I knew thee made her unhappy by thy taunts of me and my love. What other things thee told her I know not, but if thee has lied, Jonas Smiley, thee has thy God to reckon with instead of poor Edward Taber."

The elder was scruffing his hands impatiently. "My daughter did not want to marry thee," he growled, "not after I told her that—that duty to parents comes first of all."

"I have long suspicioned that thee

told her other things, Jonas Smiley," Friend Taber went on, severely. "I know now when it is too late that I should have held discourse with her, in spite of thy authority. But I have been a man unused to the ways of the world, and of woman. I will say to thee—that thee may know what loyalty means—that I love thy daughter, Tryphosy, just as dearly still. I love her so much that I live alone in that old house on Taber Hill." His voice broke. "Thee had thy wife, Jonas Smiley, to comfort thy ways. Thee has other good daughters than Tryphosy to keep thy house and minister unto thee. And I, since my mother died, have made a lonely man's poor shifts at homekeepin', with my house at sixes and sevens and with poor wit at cookin', and all because, in the whole world, I cannot find one like thy Tryphosy whom thee has selfishly denied to me, bitter and wicked old man."

Jonas Smiley raised his hairy fist and stepped forward, but Taber calmly held his ground, his trembling hands clasped before him.

"Smite not in thy anger, Jonas! Thee knows I speak the truth."

"Your brain is cracked. You're a fool! Leave here."

"I may seem queer to some, for loneliness employs many a solace that the satisfied, heart-full man does not need," said Edward. "But I note that thee has thy hand on my arm as a threat, Jonas Smiley. I have obeyed thee as to what was thine own. But this house is the Lord's. The Lord gives me this house in which to worship. Therefore, it is mine and the Lord's—and for what is mine or what is the Lord's, I will fight—hear me!—I will fight, Jonas Smiley." The repressed passion of all the years burst out. "If thee does not take away thy hand and go thy ways, I will beat thy flinty old head against that wall, and then throw thee out into the snow to cool thy unchristian wrath."

There was choking anger in the tones and a glare in the eyes that all Palermo had found so patient. Smiley fell back a moment in consternation, but the passion of the elder and master who had

been defied overmastered him. He rolled his sleeves, and advanced.

But at that moment the inner door was softly opened. The men stared. A woman's earnest, calm, kindly face was there, framed in a knitted hood.

"How does thee do, Edward Taber?" she inquired, quietly. "Father, I came across in thy tracks, because I feared thee had met strangers here to do thee some mischance."

"Daughter, I met some one here who is more perverse than blaspheming strangers," said the old man, grimly.

Friend Taber, ashamed of the beligerent attitude in which he had been detected, and feeling that now she would despise him who had offered violence to her father and disgraced the house of God by a brawl, backed away, stammering brokenly.

But Jonas did not lack for speech. "Tryphosy Smiley, years ago I told thee that thee should not marry Edward Taber, because he was no fit mate for thee."

"And I, father," she cried, with a spirit that astonished him, "told thee that I loved and had faith in Edward Taber, and knew him for a true and upright man, but thee told me other things that kept me from him—things that his life of loneliness has disproved, father, and I have longed through the years for him to speak the first word. Now, father, thee must tell Edward Taber what thee said to me."

The old man flushed and said: "Tryphosa Smiley, if thee could have heard just now what he said to me in the sanctuary of the Lord, you would not need further words of mine, but would kneel and thank God that I saved you from a cracked fool and a rebellious son of wrath."

"I did hear," said Tryphosa, calmly, "and I was glad to find out that at last Edward Taber can talk well to something beside a horse and dumb cows. Thee speaks late, Edward Taber. Thee should have mustered thy tongue years ago. Yes, I did hear thee. I stayed at the door and listened, because I had the right to hear. Edward Taber, we are now past the silly bashfulness of youth,

and we may speak in the plain way our creed allows. Years ago, my father told me that you were not worthy of a woman's love, because you had forsworn me. Now, father, repeat thy words, for thee certainly must have been honest in this that has kept apart two loving hearts."

Smiley's hard face grew slowly red, and his eyes shuttled rapidly beneath her gaze. "It is enough what he just said here in the house of God," he muttered.

"Father," she cried, impatiently, "I heard what he said here, and he spoke like a brave and honest man." Her eyes fondled Edward for a moment. "But you, father, again I command you to speak here before Edward if you dare. For I will be justified out of your own mouth."

Jonas Smiley sat down in the nearest pew and stared helplessly at his daughter. She looked at him a long time, her eyes growing hard as she stared. He had never seen that look in a woman's eyes before. They had always sunk before him in obedience. The scorn of an outraged daughter, of an elderess of the meeting toward one who had shamefully sinned, the reproach of one whose life had been marred—all these emotions did those eyes express to the selfish old man who cowered there. He tried to speak at last, but she checked him sharply.

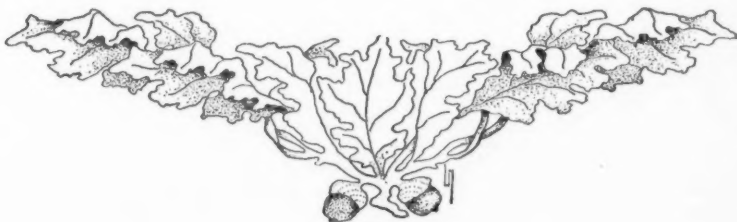
"I do not need any more words," she cried. "There have already been too many words poured into my ears—false words that must be met at the bar of God on high. But I have just heard thee speak from thy true heart to-day, Edward Taber. Is thy mind the same at this moment?"

His trembling hand stole to hers, and he was about to say something, but his eyes filled. His face ridged into the pucker that precedes tears, and then they came, running down his tanned cheeks. She kissed him on his forehead, regarded him tenderly a moment, and then turned to her father, who was scrubbing his bristly cheeks nervously. His daughter's face was stern, but now there was only quiet, Quaker dignity in her tones.

"I have nothing to say to thee, father, after the manner of the rebellious of the world. 'Tis not best to call the past into being again with words. There is much I would forget, and there is rancor in speech. And as I hold faith with thee concerning the past, so must thee hold faith with me concerning the future. The Lord is waiting here. I think thee knows now that thee found Edward here with him. We will leave thee here, father, for I am sure that thee must have much to ask of the Lord. Edward will have bread with us to-day. Thee may come home when God dismisses thee."

The old man crossed the triangle an hour later. His eyes—with a suspicious redness at the lids—noted that in each deep foot-thrust that Edward had made there was a later and smaller print as of one who had followed confidently and easily in the tracks opened ahead.

Jonas Smiley looked at the footprints with a queer, apologetic expression, and was very careful that his heavy foot did not obliterate any of them. He usually entered his own house with a slam and stamp of authority. This day he tiptoed along the porch, and stole in as abjectly as a beggar.



# THE BEST LAID PLANS

By Joseph C. Lincoln

Author of "Cap'n Eri," "Cape Cod Ballads," Etc.

## I.



"HCEBE," observed Mr. Smalley, languidly, "that hedge needs trimmin' bad. If I was well enough I'd git right out there and trim it myself. I dunno but I will, anyhow."

His sister dropped the silk shirt-waist she was making into her lap.

"Why, Ichabod Smalley!" she exclaimed, horror-stricken. "The idea! And Dr. Needham here only yesterday! I know the hedge needs trimmin'," she added, "and as soon's I get the money for this waist from Susan T., I'll have Caleb's boy trim it. 'Twon't have to wait more'n two or three days longer. Now, don't do nothin' that'll set you back, when the doctor says you're gettin' along so well. Please don't, for my sake."

The sick man heaved a sigh of resignation and crossed his hands upon the ample hemisphere of his vest.

"All right, Phoebe," he said, mournfully. "I'll do as you say; only, it's mighty hard to set here and see things goin' to wrack and ruin, and know you're too feeble to lift a hand. Sometimes," he added, desperately, "sometimes, I 'most wish I didn't have no liver."

It was the liver that was ailing just at present. A year ago it had been the heart, and before that the lungs that were dragging Mr. Smalley to the family lot in the Harniss cemetery. Appearances are oftentimes deceitful. No originality is claimed for the remark; it is merely offered as applying directly in

the case of Ichabod. To look at him one would not have guessed him to be a confirmed invalid, and yet his invalid state was so thoroughly confirmed that it had lasted for ten years, and bade fair to last for a good many years longer. He had tried ranching in the West, and the climate in that section had undermined his constitution. He had plunged into the vortex of business life in Brockton, and the cough he contracted there—together with his employer's unreasonable wish that he do something to earn his salary—had caused him to give up his situation. Two or three more spasmodic attempts at labor, and Mr. Smalley had tottered back to Harniss a self-confessed physical wreck, with a dying man's desire for rest and a convalescent's appetite. And his worshiping sister, the village dressmaker, had tended him and paid his doctor's bills—not to mention those of the tailor, grocer and butcher—ever since.

Miss Phoebe again picked up the silk waist and went on with her sewing. The invalid took a cigar from his pocket, lit it and continued to gaze gloomily out of the sitting-room window. At length he said:

"I'll say one thing for Dr. Needham: he understands my case better'n any doctor I've had since I was took down. He knew 'twas my liver right off."

The dressmaker smiled happily, her pretty, matronly face lighting up as she spoke.

"I'm real glad you feel that way, Ichabod," she replied. "I think the doctor's a splendid man. Everybody in

town likes him, and that isn't generally so with a new doctor."

"He's got sense, that's why I like him," went on her brother. "He ain't foolish like old Bradley was, and he takes an interest in a feller. Look how many times he's called sence we first had him. Bradley never seemed to think there was anything the matter with me. He was always orderin' exercise and that sort of stuff. Exercise!" The disgust in the invalid's tone was overpowering.

"And he's so pleasant and such a nice talker, too," added Phoebe.

"That's so. And he's a homeopath. No nasty medicine; nothin' but pills and such. Land! the stuff I took from them other doctors was enough to turn a pig's stomach. No, sir! homeopathy's all right, and it can have my testimony any time it wants it. Ain't that the doctor comin' now?"

A buggy was rattling down the road and the horse stopped in front of the Smalley gate. Phoebe ran to open the door. The sick man assumed an even more dejected attitude, and sank feebly back against the tidy in the rocking-chair.

Dr. Needham's greeting to Miss Smalley took—so it seemed to Ichabod—an unnecessarily long time. It was fully three minutes before the physician entered the sitting room. When he did, however, his cheery manner and solicitude for his patient smoothed away all impatience on the part of the latter.

"Well, Mr. Smalley," said the doctor, "how do you feel to-day? A little better, I hope. Yes, I think you look a little better. How is your pulse?"

Ichabod extended a very substantial wrist, and the man of medicine thumbed it in professional style.

"Still a bit hurried," he observed, after the operation was completed, "but improving—oh, yes, improving steadily. Did you take the cooling draught at bedtime?"

It had been taken as per order.

"Humph! Well, that's right. Now here is a pill that I want you to try. One every three hours during the day and when you wake at night."

"But I don't scarcely wake up till eight o'clock, doctor, and——"

"All right, all right; so much the better."

The pills—they were in a little round box and were made from a slice of bread from the doctor's breakfast table—were placed at the sufferer's right hand.

"Now, then," said Dr. Needham, "tell me once more just how you feel."

Now, describing just how he felt was Mr. Smalley's specialty, and it is possible that the doctor knew it. At any rate, he did not appear to pay much attention to the various symptoms, but instead looked steadily, in an abstracted way, at the plump figure of the pretty dressmaker. He looked so steadily that Miss Phoebe turned very red, and sewed with commendable vigor. The harrowing tale was finished at last, and Mr. Smalley waited for some comment upon it. None being made, he cleared his throat vigorously, and spoke louder.

"As I was sayin'——" he began. Dr. Needham came out of his trance with a start.

"Yes, yes!" he exclaimed. "Certainly, that's right."

"I was sayin'," continued Ichabod, "that I find the mornin' walk you told me to take is doin' me considerable good, and that maybe, if you hadn't no objection, I'd loaf along down to the post office now."

"Do you more good than anything. But take it easy, don't hurry, and, above all, don't run."

Running being a form of locomotion which Mr. Smalley had not practiced since he was a boy, this advice had a certain flavor of sarcasm about it. But the doctor's face was seriousness itself, so the sick man dryly promised that he would not run, and, his hat and cane having been brought by Miss Phoebe, he limped heavily down the walk and out of the gate. The limp became less manifest as he progressed, and before he reached the post office he was swinging the cane almost jauntily.

Dr. Needham remained to give Miss Phoebe a few more words of advice concerning her brother's condition.

At least, that was what he said he was going to remain for. As a matter of fact, the conversation covered a wide variety of subjects, each of which gave the physician an opportunity to stay a trifle longer. The parting handshake was a lengthy ceremony, for there were one or two more points to be discussed, and the doctor held Miss Phoebe's hand as they discussed them. He drove away in a blissful state of mind, and the only cloud that crossed his face during the round of calls that followed appeared when he espied Ichabod seated on the box outside of the post office.

Dr. Needham, like Mr. Smalley, was a bachelor, and also, like the invalid, had an unmarried sister who kept house for him. Miss Martha Needham had formerly lived in Wellmouth, where she presided over a "general store," but when the doctor came to practice in Harniss she also came to take care of him.

During luncheon, Miss Martha noticed that her brother seemed preoccupied and absent-minded. She asked one question after another and received the briefest of replies until, after a time, she inquired:

"I s'pose you called at the Smalleys. How's Mr. Smalley getting along?"

"Mr. Smalley," replied the doctor, sipping his coffee, "may truthfully be said to be enjoying poor health."

"Ain't he any better?" asked the lady, anxiously.

"No; nor any worse."

"How long do you think he'll live, Edward?"

"About sixty years or so, unless he's struck by lightning, or something of that sort."

The housekeeper mused over this statement for a moment, and then asked: "How's Phoebe?"

"Well," was the enthusiastic reply. "Well, and as cheerful and contented as if she didn't have a care in the world. It's too bad that a woman like her should have to support a great, hulking loafer. She ought to be married, and I don't doubt she would be if it wasn't for that handicap."

Miss Martha put down her cap.

"Why, Edward Needham!" she exclaimed. "That's the most unfeelin' speech I ever heard you make. Of course she'll take care of her poor, sick brother; any decent woman would. I don't see what makes you so hard on Mr. Smalley—poor, sufferin' soul! He was round here the other day when you was out, and I never heard a man talk more interestin' than he did. He's been West and he's seen more things. And he told me all about his sickness and everything. I declare, I pity him from the bottom of my heart!"

Now, the doctor, not being altogether an imbecile, knew when it was unwise to contradict his sister. He made no further comment on the afflicted Ichabod, but finished his coffee in silence and went into his office to look over the morning mail. In the mail was a letter from an old friend of his, who was proprietor and manager of an orange plantation in Florida. The letter contained one or two statements that seemed to interest the doctor greatly. He read them over several times, and then, lighting a cigar, settled back in his chair to think.

Next day his call at the Smalley house was so timed that it found Miss Phoebe alone, Ichabod being on his regular pilgrimage to the post office. The doctor seated himself in the sitting-room rocker, and opened the conversation thus:

"Miss Smalley, I want to talk with you on an important matter. For some time it has been apparent to me that what your brother really needs is a change of climate. This Cape Cod air is bad for him—very bad. Perpetual sunshine and perpetual summer will do more for him than anything else. I have hesitated to advise a Southern trip before because of the expense, but I believe that good luck has solved the problem for us. I have a friend in Florida who is an orange grower, and he writes me that he needs an assistant superintendent on his plantation. Right in the heart of Florida, where——"

"But, doctor, Ichabod ain't well enough to work."

"Of course not, but this isn't work."



It's really nothing but an everlasting vacation with a salary attached. Just let me explain."

And the doctor did explain; explained till the perspiration stood out on his forehead. Florida, according to him, was a sort of left-over from paradise, and an orange plantation was an improvement on heaven. Mr. Smalley, so he said, would have nothing to do but walk around amid the bloom and perfume, and occasionally see that the negroes kept awake, nothing more. It took a full half hour, but at the end of that time Miss Phoebe had agreed to use her powers to persuade her brother to accept the position.

"I shall miss him dreadfully," she declared, "but I s'pose it's all for his good."

"Yes, indeed," concurred Dr. Needham, with enthusiasm, and sought the telegraph office to wire his Florida friend thus:

Have assistant superintendent for you.  
Have written.

It took more than a half hour's time to win Ichabod to the plan. At first he flatly refused, and suffered an alarming relapse. Then, as the doctor's imagination grew, under pressure, more active, the glories of Florida began to allure him. He was to travel in a Pullman, of course, and he had never traveled in a Pullman. He was to be paid for watching other people work, and watching other people work was a favorite amusement of his. Altogether, it looked like a pleasant way of seeing the country. Under protest, Mr. Smalley accepted the position. The condition of his liver, so he told the crowd at the post office, made it impossible for him to do anything else.

And so, after a great packing of trunks by the tearful Phoebe, Ichabod went to the railway station, escorted by envious friends and the doctor.

"Above all things," begged Phoebe, as she kissed him farewell, "don't work too hard, Ichabod."

And Ichabod promised that he wouldn't.

Meanwhile, the Florida orange grower had received a long letter from his friend, Dr. Needham. It concluded with these words:

He may not, and probably won't, be worth his salt, but keep him just the same. If necessary, I'll pay his salary. Only don't let him come back here.

The Harniss gossips had not time to recover from the dissensions following the invalid's departure for the Sunny South, when another sensation was sprung upon them. It was first noticed that Dr. Needham's calls at the Smalley homestead, so far from ceasing because of his patient's absence, became more frequent. Then he was seen taking Miss Phoebe for a ride. Then, in less than a month, like an explosion burst upon the town the news that the doctor and Miss Smalley had been quietly married and were about to leave for the West on an extended honeymoon trip. Dr. Saunders was to care for the Needham patients during his fellow practitioner's absence.

"You may forward all my letters to the Geyser Hotel in the Yellowstone National Park, Martha," said the bridegroom to his sister. "That will be our headquarters for the present."

## II.

The Pullman was all that Ichabod had anticipated. To loll back with his head upon a plush cushion, while his feet ornamented another plush cushion, came pretty close to a realization of greatness. To have an obsequious colored gentleman always at one's beck and call was another delight. Ichabod beckoned and called until the colored gentleman was weary, but the physical fatigue of the latter was as nothing compared to the weariness of spirit with which he saw Mr. Smalley receive the final "brushing off" with complacent ease, and prepare to leave the train at the Florida station without even putting a hand in his pocket.

"Ain't--ain't you forgot some'n, boss?" ventured the colored gentleman.

Ichabod looked over his belongings with a deliberate eye.

"I guess not," he said. "I cal'late everything's here."

Whereupon he stepped out upon the platform, and the porter retired to the smoking compartment to express his feelings.

But the reception at the orange plantation was not entirely satisfactory. The owner of the establishment, whose name was Daniels, read the letter of introduction from Dr. Needham, and then deliberately surveyed Mr. Smalley's substantial person.

"Humph!" he grunted, and then sent for his superintendent.

The superintendent, whose name was Kelly, looked Mr. Smalley over and also said: "Humph!" Later, as they left the Daniels house together, he inquired:

"What sort of work have you been doin' lately?"

"Ain't done *no* work for ten year or more," replied the invalid. "My liver's out of gear."

"Well, I'll be damned!" said Mr. Kelly, and nothing else.

At the end of three weeks Ichabod decided that the climate of Florida was unsuited to his state of health. In the first place, it was very hot, and when he went to sleep in the shade, Kelly, or some one else, made remarks that were hotter still. Watching other people work wasn't as pleasant as he had thought it would be, and when he complained of his liver, the superintendent prescribed doses that made Dr. Bradley's medicines seem like nectar in comparison. Mr. Daniels kept carefully out of the way. The orange grower was indebted to Dr. Needham for certain favors, financial and otherwise, and, although Kelly threatened to resign unless his new assistant was "fired," Daniels felt that he could not risk such a step.

Ichabod told of his feelings in a long letter to his sister, announced himself as a "dyin' man," and begged her to send him money so that he might come back to Harniss and end his days in peace. No answer to this touching

epistle was received, and he wrote another, and then another. He had drawn more than a month's wages in advance, and so had no resources of his own to depend upon.

At length he went to Mr. Daniels, stated that he was "pretty nigh gone," and begged for his release and his fare home. His request was curtly denied.

One day the superintendent's comments were sharper than usual, and the invalid rebelled.

"I wish to the Lord I was home!" he shouted.

"I wish to blazes you was," agreed Kelly, heartily. "Why in thunder don't you go?"

"'Cause I ain't got no money. You give me my car fare, and see how quick I'll git out."

The superintendent hesitated; then he beckoned his assistant to follow him to a spot just out of hearing of the laborers.

"See here," he said, "if I give you your fare home will you go now—to-night?"

"You bet!"

Mr. Kelly glanced right and left to be certain that he was not seen, and then unstrapped a bulky pocketbook and handed Mr. Smalley a sum of money.

"Don't say a word to Daniels or Needham about this. If you do I'll—I'll hunt you up and 'bleed' you for good and all," he declared.

Ichabod counted the bills in his hand.

"Say," he protested, "this ain't enough. I want my Pullman money and my meals in the dining car."

The superintendent stared at him in astonished admiration.

"Well, I'll be—blessed!" he exclaimed. And then, as he added another note to the sum already "loaned," he muttered: "It's worth it, and more, too."

And so, on an evening of a day shortly after this conversation took place, as Miss Martha Needham sat on the porch of her brother's house, she saw a bulky figure open the front gate. She rose to her feet and looked closely at her visitor. When the lamplight from the doorway shone upon his face,

she exclaimed: "For the land of goodness! Mr. Smalley!"

But Ichabod did not stop to explain. He was worried.

"Miss Needham," he asked, anxiously, "where's Phœbe? I've been over to the house and it's all shut up."

"Shut up? Why, of course it is. Why—why, Mr. Smalley! You don't mean to say you don't *know*?"

"Know? Know what?"

"Why, about Phœbe and Edward's bein' married."

"Bein' married? Phœbe and the doc!"

"Of course. They was married over two weeks ago and went West on their weddin' tower."

Ichabod sat heavily down on the step.

"Well, I swan to man!" he ejaculated, and then added: "Pretty way, not to let a feller know when his sister's married!"

"But Phœbe wrote you a long letter. Ever so long. I saw her give it to Edward to mail."

"She did, hey? Give it to him to mail? I want to know!"

"Yes, and he must have forgot it, or else 'twas addressed wrong or some-thin'. But, my sakes! what am I thinkin' off? Come right into the house this minute. A man in your health settin' on a damp step this 'time in the evenin'!"

Mr. Smalley accepted the invitation, but he seemed to be thinking hard. He ate a hearty supper for a "dying man," and asked questions between mouthfuls. He was still thinking when he went upstairs to the doctor's room to bed.

### III.

Dr. Needham and Phœbe had, before they started on their wedding journey, prepared a list of the places they were going to visit and the order in which they would visit them. The Yellowstone Park was to be their first stopping point, but on the way to Chicago they fell in with a gentleman who described the beauties of the Yosemite Valley so effectively that Phœbe ex-

pressed a wish that they might go there "right away." So they did go there, and thence to Southern California, and then to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. And it was not until they were on their way back to Harniss that the doctor wrote to the Geyser Hotel to have his letters—if there were any awaiting him—sent home again. They did not visit the Yellowstone at all.

"It's fine to go away," sighed Phœbe, contentedly, as they rode through the village in the "depot wagon" on the evening of their return, "but it's jest as fine to get home once more. I never thought I'd see Glacier Point nor the big trees, but, now that I've seen 'em, I don't know but I'm 'most as glad to see Bill Fessenden's blacksmith shop again."

And with this sentiment the doctor agreed, as became a newly married man.

"Poor Martha!" said Phœbe, a moment later. "I expect she's been awful lonesome. And to think we ain't heard a word from her nor from Ichabod since we went away."

"That was careless of me, I'll admit," said her husband. "Hello! Martha's expecting us. Look at the illumination."

The Needham residence was lighted up as if kerosene was as cheap as water, and Martha herself came running to meet them as they alighted from the "depot wagon." She and Phœbe wept on each other's necks, while the doctor and the driver carried in the trunks.

"Did you have a nice trip?" inquired Martha, when they were in the dining room.

"Perfectly splendid! I'll tell you all about it," began the bride, but Miss Needham interrupted her.

"Wait jest a minute," she said. "I've got a surprise for you; two surprises, really."

"A surprise? What sort of a surprise—a nice one?"

"Nicest ever was, I cal'late. Here 'tis."

And having thus prepared them for the treat in store, Miss Martha threw open the door leading to the kitchen.

"Why—why, *Ichabod*!" screamed Phœbe, and threw herself into the arms

of the invalid. Dr. Needham said nothing, but he sat down in the biggest rocker.

"Hello, brother-in-law!" said Mr. Smalley, holding out his hand. "Ain't you glad to see me?"

The doctor shook the extended hand in a preoccupied way, and said he was very glad indeed to see its owner. Then he casually asked if the latter was home on a vacation.

"Why, yes," was the answer. "The kind of vacation that lasts a long spell. Fact is, that—here, Martha, you tell 'em."

Miss Needham turned red, glanced tenderly at Mr. Smalley and stammered:

"Well, you see, Florida didn't agree with Ichabod a mite. It—it made his liver worse than ever. It 'most killed you, didn't it, Ichabod?"

"Pretty nigh," said the sufferer, dolefully.

"And he hadn't heard a word from either of you, though he wrote and wrote. Why, he didn't even know you was married!"

"Didn't—didn't—why, I wrote him the longest kind of a letter, tellin' him all about it. Edward, you mailed that letter yourself."

The doctor, conscious that everyone was looking at him, blushed and said that he thought he mailed it—he certainly meant to.

"Well, he never got it, anyhow," continued Martha. "And so he come home here almost dead. 'Twas awful to see him. If I hadn't nursed him right along for a week, I'm 'fraid he wouldn't be here now."

"You poor thing!" moaned Phoebe, looking pityingly at her brother.

"Yes," went on Miss Needham, "he was dreadful sick for a week. If ever a man needed a woman to take care of him, 'twas him. And—and that's all."

"No, 'tain't all," broke in Mr. Smalley. "Go on, Martha; tell the rest."

"Well——" The lady blushed and twisted the corner of her apron. "As I say, I could see he needed a nurse all the time—and I knew Phoebe was married now and had a husband to look

out for—and he—he wanted me to—so—well—so we went to the minister's last Thursday and got married. That's the other surprise."

It was undoubtedly a surprise. Phoebe gave a little scream and clasped her hands.

"Not really?" she exclaimed. As for her husband, he looked as if he had suddenly been frozen stiff.

"*Married?*" repeated Phoebe. "Not really? Oh, how perfectly lovely!" And she flew at the happy pair and gave each of them a hug.

Mrs. Smalley looked at her brother and remarked, tartly: "Well, Edward, haven't you got a word to say?"

Dr. Needham swallowed two or three times, as though he would like to say something very much indeed. What he did say, however, was this:

"Martha, have you considered whether or not Ichabod is financially able to provide for a wife?"

His sister bristled up like an angry hen.

"Well, I like that!" she exclaimed. "And him next to death's door, as you might say! I want you to understand that I was able to earn a good livin' and take care of myself before ever I come to keep house for you, Ed Needham, and I guess I'm able to support my husband—poor sick man!"

But this declaration of independence brought Mrs. Needham to the front.

"Well, I guess you won't!" she exclaimed. "I took care of my brother for ten years, and I guess I'll do my share of takin' care of him now; even though"—with a withering glance at the hapless physician—"my husband won't help me."

Dr. Needham rose to his feet.

"Hold on, girls!" he said. "Don't quarrel. I guess, between us, we'll be able to look out for the—the invalid."

Now, the ladies were looking at each other as this conciliatory speech was delivered, but the doctor was looking at Ichabod, and, as he looked, he saw one fat eyelid droop and quiver for a fraction of a second.

It was only a suspicion of a wink, but——

# THE PATERNAL BURGLAR

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

Author of "A Little Traitor to the South" "A Doctor of Philosophy," Etc.



ABOUT the emptiest thing in human experience is a home from which the inmates have departed and which has been closed for a summer vacation. The contrast between the open and sunny cottage at Shelter Island and the shut-up town house that hot August night was appalling. John Gordon was not able to spend the entire summer with Edith and the children at the seashore. Part of the time he had to be in the city, but he was too wise a man ever to camp out in a deserted dwelling during the absence of everybody else. He went to the club. Consequently, he had never before experienced the sense of lonely, desolate emptiness which came over him as he and Edith, leading William, aged four, between them, unlocked the door and entered the house.

William was ill. He had had a bad fall, bumped his head, and the local doctor suggested that it would be well to take him to the city for an examination. Edith had brought him down and had met John, and as the family exchequer was somewhat depleted by the expenses of the summer outing, after supper she had insisted on going out to the house for the night, to save a hotel bill. The rest of the family, including the maids, remained at the cottage under the charge of John's secretary, who sometimes spent part of her vacation with the family.

After John got the windows of their bedroom open and the electric lights turned on, the gloom was somewhat lightened, but it was bad enough at best. The doctor had seen William, and

had decided that there was nothing permanent or serious the matter with him. He had prescribed a course of treatment and advised John to send him back to the seashore early the next morning. The doctor had warned John privately that there might be some disturbances of a convulsive nature for a short period, but that they would soon pass away. He had also told him just what to do in such an emergency. As tactfully as possible, John had thereafter communicated the news to Edith, who was in a great state of perturbation.

However, William seemed well enough, and there was nothing else to do but compose themselves to sleep. The night was hot, and they slept lightly. Every time William made a move Edith would rise on her elbow and look at him, or endeavor to quiet him with gentle, motherly pats on the shoulder. John, who usually slept like a log, often awoke on these occasions and listened anxiously until the regular breathing of the child indicated that all was well again. Finally they both fell sound asleep, only to be awakened about half after twelve o'clock by a frightened cry from the little boy.

John was out of bed in an instant. He did not turn on the light. An arc lamp from the street illumined the room through the open windows. He ran over to the crib, and picked up William. The little boy seemed to be in a state of profound terror. His little body burned with fever, his eyes glistened with fright. He clasped his father's hand with his own little ones and stared over his head at some unknown object

which scared him almost to death. He shrieked and screamed and writhed in John's arms with convulsive energy, in spite of every effort his father made to pacify and reassure him.

Edith was by her husband's side in a moment. She was almost as frightened as William. John preserved his coolness, however. He remembered that the doctor had told him that this might occur.

"We must take him to the bathroom," he said, quickly. "Now, don't give way, Edith. He'll be all right."

He had endeavored to soothe and quiet the spasmodic child in vain, and now determined to give him a hot bath. He rose to his feet as he spoke, and, followed by Edith, stepped into the little square hall which ran between the bedroom and the bathroom. There was light enough in the hall from the open door of the bedroom to show them that they were not alone. Coming down the stairs from the third story was a burly, rough-looking man with his hat well pulled down over his eyes, his coat turned up around his neck. In his left hand he carried a bull's-eye lantern. It was shut, but little trickles of light indicated what it was. In his right hand he held a revolver.

John and Edith were between him and the stairs to the ground floor. As they appeared he raised the revolver.

"Don't make a move," he growled, "or I'll let daylight through you!"

"That's all right," said John, hastily; "we don't want to harm you. This baby is very ill, perhaps dying. Edith, turn on the light."

Edith fumbled at the push buttons in the side of the wall unavailingly. Her agitation at the sight of the burglar, coupled with her anxiety for William, rendered her almost incapable of effort.

"Here, man," said John, noticing her failure, "turn on your light, will you? Quick, for God's sake!"

The burglar, amazed at the extraordinary turn the affair had taken, in obedience to John's sharp request, opened the shutters of the bull's-eye, and by its aid in another second Edith found the button and flooded the hall with light.

"Thank you," said John, to the burglar.

"Oh, John," exclaimed Edith, in great dismay at that moment, "there's no hot water! What shall we do?"

There was a so-called—in the advertisements!—instantaneous hot water heater in the kitchen.

"Take the baby, Edith, and I'll go down and light the heater," said her husband.

But William, who had been shrieking and screaming like one possessed all this time, could not be torn from John's arms.

"You will have to light it yourself," said John, desperately, at last.

"I—I'm afraid to go down alone," faltered Edith, with a fearful glance at the burglar, who had stood stock-still, staring at the couple.

"This gentleman will go with you, I'm sure," said her husband.

"Cert'nly, mum," said the burglar, in a voice which was extremely encouraging.

Under any other circumstances Edith would promptly have fainted at the mere sight of that burglar, but now that her child's life was in danger she could brave anything. She turned and, followed by the burglar, ran down the back stairs, which also opened into the hall, toward the kitchen. The gas burner under the hot water tank was a complicated affair, being one of the old-fashioned kind, and in her anxiety Edith did not start it properly. The burglar had been watching her intently.

"Lemme do it, mum," he said at last, most respectfully. "I know all about them contrivances. I was a plumber once."

Perhaps that explained his present profession! At any rate, he took the match box from her trembling hand, and in a moment the heater was roaring gloriously.

"You kin go upstairs now, mum," said the man, turning to Edith, "an' tell your husband that it's all right. I'll tend to this part of the game."

John, in the bathroom above, had spent the time trying to calm William, but without success. However, as soon



as the water became hot enough he dipped him in the tub. The effect was magical. The little limbs straightened out, the frightened eyes lost their look of terror, although they still gleamed with fever. He began to talk rationally. He had been put in the tub so that his face was toward the door. John and Edith, busy with his bath, had not noticed what was happening outside. It was William who recalled them to the presence of the burglar.

"Papa," he said, suddenly, "who's dat?"

There stood their midnight visitor. He had left his revolver and lantern in the kitchen, apparently. His hat was pushed back from his forehead, his coat collar was turned down. There was a look of eager interest in his face.

"Did the water git hot enough?" he asked.

"Yes, thank you," said Gordon.

"I thought I'd come up an' see how the kid was gittin' along."

"He will soon be all right, I think."

"But, John, we ought to have the doctor," urged Edith.

"Certainly," returned her husband. "Can you use a telephone?" he asked of their new assistant.

"Sure."

"I wish you would call up the doctor. His number is 250 Prospect. Ask him to come over to Mr. Gordon's at once. The baby is very ill."

"All right," said the man, briskly, turning away from the door toward the telephone, which stood on a table in the hall.

"Who is dat?" asked William again.

"He is—a friend of ours," answered John, smiling grimly, "who paid us an unexpected but most opportune call."

Telephones are contrary objects. Oftentimes they do not work properly, especially when you want them the most. The burglar rang and rang, but got no answer.

"Say," he said at last, "where does the doctor live? I'll go an' fetch him."

"Just around the corner," said John, giving him the doctor's number.

"I'll be back in a jiffy," returned the man, clattering down the stairs.

They took William out of the bath, dried him and put on his nightshirt again, and John carried him back to his crib. He was calmer, but still twitched and shivered nervously.

"Oh, John, I wish the doctor would come!" Edith exclaimed. "I am so alarmed!"

"Never mind, dear," said her husband, reassuringly; "the worst is over now."

"Do you think that man will get him?"

"I haven't a doubt of it. He looks like a man that would get anything he wanted."

Sure enough, in an incredibly short time, the burglar, who had been lucky enough to find the doctor just returning to his home from another night call, entered the room accompanied by the physician. Then he stepped back and waited interestedly. As John had said, the worst was over. After a careful examination, the doctor was able to reassure the alarmed parents that the child would soon be all right. He administered a sedative and left other medicines, bade them good-night, and turned to take his departure.

"By the way," he said, looking around, "where is the man you sent for me?"

"I don't know," answered John. "He was here a moment ago and——"

"I suppose he has fled with all the silver in the house," interrupted Edith.

"What!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Yes. He was a burglar. Didn't you know it? He had broken into the house somehow, and we met him on the stairs when Mr. Gordon carried William to the bathroom."

"That accounts for it."

"Accounts for what?" asked John.

"Why, we were stopped by Officer Shaughnessy just before we entered the house. He caught hold of the man's arm, and said: 'What are you doin' here?' in a very suspicious and discourteous manner, I thought."

"What did the man say?" asked Gordon, curiously.

"He said that he was a friend of yours," returned the doctor.

"He was—he is," interjected John. "That he was going for a doctor for your boy, who was very ill," continued the physician, unheeding the interruption. "'That's a lie,' said the officer; 'there ain't nobody in that house. The family's away for the summer.' I was able to assure him that you had returned for the night, and that I had no doubt the man's story was correct. I said that I would vouch for him, never dreaming that you would make use of such a messenger. The policeman knew me, and so he let us go on."

"Any port in a storm, doctor," said John. "The telephone wouldn't work, and the man offered to go for you. Besides, he acted splendidly. He could not have done more had he been a brother."

"Well," said the doctor, "this is the funniest experience I ever had. However, it's all over now. I'll look in on William in the morning, before you go downtown for the day. Good-night."

He turned to the stairs again, but before he had left the upper hall there was a sudden rapping as of a night stick on the floor below.

"Hello, the house!" said a gruff voice out of the darkness.

"Who's that?" asked John.

"It's me. Officer Shaughnessy. I found the door of your house open, sor, an' there's a light in your dinin' room beyant. I seen a suspicious character around here for some time, an', though Dr. Williams vouched fer him, I ain't satisfied that——"

"That's all right," said John; "he was only a burglar."

"I knowed it!" said the policeman, triumphantly. "You gents better come downstairs and take a look around with me."

A moment after, the three men entered the dining room. There on the table in a cloth lay a pile of the family silver, all, in fact, that had not been taken to the seashore, or which was too bulky for John's safe deposit box.

"What did I tell ye?" said the policeman, pointing. "I guess I got here in the nick of time."

"Where did he get out?" asked the doctor.

"Must have been by the back door. I was watchin' the front of the house all the time after I seen ye come in, doctor," said Shaughnessy.

"Gentlemen," said John, who had been intently inspecting the pile of silver, "look at this."

He held up a scrap of paper, evidently torn from the edge of a newspaper. On it was scribbled in pencil:

*I got a little kid meself at home.*

No, the burglar had not been scared off by the valorous demonstrations of the officer. The one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin had been applied to him that night. He had become so interested in the struggle, in which he had co-operated so zealously, to save William's life, that he had not the heart to rob the house. It was very absurd, doubtless, from his point of view, but John had called him a gentleman and had trusted his wife to him! Never had an ironical appellation borne better fruit, either, and for one night at least that burglar had endeavored to live up to the title.

"I got a little kid meself," had a homely touch that brought the tears into Edith's eyes, when John showed her the scrap of paper after the house had been locked up once more.

"I would like to see that man again," she said, feelingly; "there is good in him. He was as polite as he knew how to be."

"Well," said John, "I have read of gentlemanly burglars in fiction, and I really do not see why the profession is incompatible with courtesy and good breeding. In fact, if I were a burglar myself, I think I should try always to burgle most politely."

"Jack Gordon, you'd make a joke out of anything! This only re-enforces my opinion that if you treat everybody like a gentleman they always will be one!"

Which was illogical, ungrammatical, but profoundly true.

# THE FATAL FLOROZONDE

By Leonard Merrick



BEFORE Pitou, the composer, left for the Hague, he called on Théophile de Fronsac, the poet. *La Voix Parisienne* had lately appointed De Fronsac to its staff, on condition that he contributed no poetry.

"Good-evening," said De Fronsac. "Mon Dieu! what shall I write about?"

"Write about my music," said Pitou, whose compositions had been rejected in every arrondissement of Paris.

"Let us talk sanely," demurred De Fronsac. "My *causerie* is half a column short. Tell me something interesting."

"Woman," replied Pitou.

De Fronsac flicked his cigarette ash. "You remind me," he said, "how much I need a love affair; my sensibilities should be stimulated. To continue to write with fervor, I require to adore again."

"It is very easy to adore," observed Pitou.

"Not at forty," lamented the other; "especially to a man in Class A. Don't forget, my young friend, that I have loved, and been loved, persistently for twenty-three years. I cannot adore a repetition, and it is impossible for me to discover a new type."

"All of which I understand," said Pitou, "excepting Class A."

"There are three kinds of men," explained the poet. "Class A represents the men to whom women inevitably surrender. Class B consists of those whom they trust by instinct and confide in on the second day; these men acquire an extensive knowledge of the sex—but they always fall short of winning the women for themselves. Class C women

think of merely as 'The others'—they do not count. Eventually they marry, and persuade their wives that they were devils of fellows when they were young. However, such reflections will not assist me to finish my *causerie*, for I wrote them all last week."

"Talking of women," remarked Pitou, "a little blonde has come to live opposite my lodging. So far we have only bowed from our windows, but I have christened her 'Lynette,' and made a poem about her. It is pathetic. The last verse—the others are not written yet—goes:

O window I watched in the days that are dead,

Are you watched by a lover to-day?

Are glimpses caught now of another blond head

By a youth who lives over the way?

Does *she* repeat words that Lynette's lips have said,

And does *he* say what *I* used to say?

"What is the answer?" asked De Fronsac. "Is it a conundrum? In any case, it is a poor substitute for half a column of prose in *La Voix*. How on earth am I to arrive at the bottom of the page? If I am short in my copy, I shall be short in my rent; if I am short in my rent, I shall be put out of doors; if I am put out of doors, I shall die of exposure. And much good it will do me that they erect a statue to me in the next generation! Upon my word, I would stand a dinner—at the two-franc place where you may eat all you can hold—if you could give me a subject."

"It happens," said Pitou, "that I can give you a very strange one. As I am going to a foreign land I have been to the country to bid farewell to my par-

ents; I came across an extraordinary girl."

"One who disliked presents?" inquired De Fronsac.

"I am not jesting. She is a dancer in a traveling circus. The flare and the drum wooed me one night, and I went in. As a circus—well, you may imagine—a tent in a fair. My *fauteuil* was a plank, and the orchestra surpassed the worst tortures of the Inquisition. And then, after the decrepit horses and a mangy lion, a girl came into the ring, with the most marvelous eyes I have ever seen in a human face. They are green eyes, with golden lights in them."

"*Mon Dieu!*" murmured the poet, "I have never been loved by a girl who had green eyes with golden lights in them."

"I am glad you have never been loved by this one," returned the composer, gravely; "she has a curious history. All her lovers, without exception, have committed suicide."

"What?" said De Fronsac, staring.

"It is very queer. One of them had just inherited a hundred thousand francs when he died—he hanged himself. Another—an author from Italy—took poison while all Rome was reading his novel. To be infatuated by her, they say, is harmless enough, but to win her is invariably fatal within a few weeks. Some time ago she engaged herself to one of the troupe, and soon afterward he learned she was deceiving him. He resolved to shoot her; he pointed a pistol at her breast. She simply laughed—and looked at him. He turned the pistol on himself, and blew his brains out!"

De Fronsac had already written: "Here is the extraordinary history of a girl I discovered in a fair." The next moment—

"But you repeat a rumor," he objected. "*La Voix Parisienne* has a reputation; odd as the fact may appear to you, people read it. If this is published in *La Voix*, it will attract attention. Soon she will be promoted from a tent in a fair to a stage in Paris. Well, what happens? You tell me she is beautiful; so she will have hundreds of ad-

mirers. Among the hundreds there will be one she favors. And then? Unless he committed suicide in a few weeks, the paper would be proved a liar. I should not be able to sleep of nights for fear he would not kill himself."

"My dear," exclaimed Pitou, with emotion, "would I add to your anxieties? Rather than you should be distressed by anybody's living, let us dismiss the subject—and the dinner—and talk of my new symphony. On the other hand, I fail to see that the paper's reputation is your affair—you are not married to it; and I am more than usually empty to-day."

"Your argument is sound," said De Fronsac. "Besides, the editor refuses my poetry." And he wrote without cessation for ten minutes.

The two-franc table d'hôte excelled itself that evening, and Pitou did ample justice to the menu.

Behold how capricious is the jade, Fame! The poet whose verses had left him obscure accomplished in ten minutes a paragraph that fascinated all Paris. On the morrow, people pointed it out to one another; the morning after, other journals referred to it; in the afternoon, the editor of *La Voix Parisienne* was importuned with questions. No one believed the story to be true, but not a soul could help wondering if it might be so.

When a day or two had passed, Pitou received a note from De Fronsac, which ran:

Send to me at once, I entreat thee, the name of that girl, and say where she can be found. The managers of three variety theaters of the first-class have sought me out, and are eager to engage her.

"Decidedly," said Pitou, "I have mistaken my vocation—I ought to have been a novelist!" And he replied:

The girl whose eyes suggested the story to me is called on the programs "*Florozonde*." For the rest, I know nothing, except that thou didst offer a dinner, and I was hungry.

However, when he had written this, he destroyed it.

"Though I am unappreciated myself, and shall probably conclude in the morgue," he mused, "that is no excuse for my withholding prosperity from others. Doubtless the poor girl would rejoice to appear at three variety theaters of the first class, or even at one of them." He answered simply:

Her name is "Florozonde"; she will be found in a circus at Chartres.

And then he nearly suffocated with laughter.

Then a little later the papers announced that Mlle. Florozonde—whose love, by a strange series of coincidences, had always proved fatal—would be seen at La Coupole. Posters bearing the name of "Florozonde"—black on yellow—invaded the boulevards. Her portraits caused crowds to assemble, and "That girl who, they say, deals death—that Florozonde" was to be heard as constantly as "Hiawatha."

By this time Pitou was in the Hague, his necessities having driven him into the employment of a Parisian who had opened a shop there for the sale of music and French pianos. When he read the Paris papers, Pitou trembled so violently that the onlookers thought he must have ague. Hilarity struggled with envy in his breast.

"*Ma foi!*" he would say to himself, "it seems that my destiny is to create successes for others. Here am I, exiled, and condemned to play cadenzas all day in a piano warehouse, while she whom I invented dances jubilant in Paris. I do not question but what she drives in the Bois, and dines at Paillard's!"

And it was a fact that Florozonde was the fashion. As regards her eyes, at any rate the young man had not exaggerated more than is to be forgiven in an artist; her eyes were superb, supernatural; and now that the spangled finery of a fair was replaced by the most triumphant of audacities—now that a circus band had been exchanged for the orchestra of La Coupole—she danced as she had not danced before. You say that a gorgeous costume cannot improve a woman's dancing? Let a woman realize that you have improved her appear-

ance, and you improve everything she can do.

Nevertheless, one does not pretend that it was owing to her talent, or her costume, or the weird melody composed by the *chef d'orchestre* that she became the rage. Not at all. That was due to her reputation. Skeptics might smile, and murmur "*Réclame!*" but, again, nobody could say positively that the tragedies had not occurred. And above all, there were the eyes—it was conceded that a woman with eyes like that ought to be abnormal. La Coupole was thronged every night, and the stage door keeper grew rich, so numerous were the daring spirits, coquetting with death, who tendered notes inviting the Fatal One to supper.

Somehow the suppers were rather dreary. The cause may have been that the guest was handicapped by circumstances—to be good company without discarding the fatal air was extremely difficult; also the cause may have been that the daring spirits felt their courage forsake them in a *tête-à-tête*; but it is certain that once when Florozonde drove home in the small hours to the tattered aunt who lived on her, she exclaimed violently that "all this silly fake was giving her the hump, and she wished she were 'on the road' again, with a jolly good fellow who was not afraid of her!"

Then the tattered aunt cooed to her, reminding her that little ducklings had run to her already roasted, and adding that she—the tattered aunt—had never heard of equal luck in all the years she had been in the show business.

"Ah, bah!" cried Florozonde. "It does not please me to be treated as if I had scarlet fever. If I lean toward a man, he turns pale."

"Life is good," said her aunt, philosophically, "and men have no wish to die for the sake of an embrace—remember your reputation! Look at your salary, sweetie—and you have had nothing to do but hold your tongue. Oh, was anything ever heard like it? A miracle of *le bon Dieu!*"

"It was Monsieur de Fonsac, the journalist, who started it," said Floro-

zonde. "I supposed he had made it up, to give me a lift, but, *ma foi*, I think *he* half believes it, too! What can have put it in his head? I have a mind to ask him the next time he comes behind."

"What a madness!" exclaimed the old woman. "You might queer your pitch! Never, never perform a trick with a confederate when you can work alone; that is one of the first rules of life. If he thinks it is true, so much the better. Now get to bed, lovey, and think of pleasant things. What did you have for supper?"

Florozone was correct in her surmise. De Fronsac did half believe it, and De Fronsac was accordingly much perturbed. Consider his dilemma! The nature of his pursuits had demanded a love affair, and he had endeavored conscientiously to comply, for the man was nothing if not an artist. But, as he had said to Pitou, he had loved so much, and so many, that the thing was practically impossible for him. He was like the pastry cook's boy who is habituated, and bilious. Then suddenly a new type, which he had despaired of finding, was displayed. His curiosity awoke; and, fascinated in the first instance by her ghastly reputation, he was fascinated gradually by her physical charms. Again he found himself enslaved by a woman—and the woman, who owed her fame to his services, was clearly appreciative. But he had a strong objection to committing suicide.

His eagerness for her love was only equalled by his dread of what might happen if she gave it to him. Alternately he yearned and shuddered. On Monday he cried: "Idiot, to be frightened by such blague!" and on Tuesday he told himself: "All the same, there may be something in it!"

It was thus tortured he paid his respects to Florozonde at the theater on the evening after she complained to her aunt. She was in her dressing room, making ready to go.

"You have danced divinely," he said to her. "There is no longer a program at La Coupole—there is only Florozonde."

She smiled the mysterious smile that

she was cultivating. "What have you been doing with yourself, monsieur? I have not seen you all the week."

De Fronsac sighed expressively. "At my age one has the wisdom to avoid temptation."

"May it not be rather unkind to temptation?" she suggested, raising her marvelous eyes.

De Fronsac drew a step back. "Also I have had a great deal to do," he added, formally; "I am a busy man. For example, much as I should like to converse with you now—" But his resolution forsook him, and he was unable to say that he had only looked in for a minute.

"Much as you would like to converse with me?" questioned Florozonde.

"I ought, by rights, to be seated at my desk," he concluded, lamely.

"I am pleased that you are not seated at your desk," she said.

"Because?" murmured De Fronsac, with unspeakable emotions.

"Because I have never thanked you enough for your interest in me, and I want to tell you that I remember." She gave him her hand; he held it, battling with terror.

"Mademoiselle," he returned, tremulously, "when I wrote the *causerie* you refer to, my interest in you was purely the interest of a journalist, so for that I do not deserve your thanks. But since I have had the honor to meet you I have experienced an interest altogether different—the interest of a man, of a—  
a—" Here his teeth chattered, and he paused.

"Of a what?" she asked, softly, with a dreamy air.

"Of a friend," he muttered. A gust of fear had made the "friend" an iceberg. But her clasp tightened.

"I am glad!" she said. "Oh, you have been good to me, monsieur; and if, in spite of everything, I am sometimes sad, I am at least never ungrateful."

"You are sad?" faltered the vacillating victim. "Why?"

Her bosom rose. "Is success all a woman wants?"

"Ah!" exclaimed De Fronsac, in an



impassioned quaver, "is that not life? To all of us there is the unattainable—to you, to me!"

"To you?" she murmured. Her eyes were transcendental. Admiration and alarm tore him in halves.

"In truth," he gasped, "I am the most miserable of men. What is genius, what is fame, when one is lonely and unloved?"

She moved impetuously closer—so close that the perfume of her hair intoxicated him. His heart seemed to knock against his ribs, and he felt the perspiration burst out on his brow. For an instant he hesitated—on the edge of his grave, he thought. Then he dropped her hand, and backed from her. "But why should I bore you with my griefs?" he stammered. "*Au revoir*, mademoiselle."

Outside the stage door he gave thanks for his self-control. Also, pale with the crisis, he registered an oath not to approach her again.

Meanwhile the expatriated Pitou had remained disconsolate. Though the people in the Hague spoke French, they said foreign things to him in it. He missed Montmartre—the interests of home. While he waxed eloquent to customers on the tone of pianos, or the sweetness of rival composers' melodies, he was envying Florozonde in Paris. Florozonde, whom he had created, obsessed the young man. In the evening he read about her in *Van der Pyl's*; on Sundays, when the tram carried him to drink beer at Scheveningen, he read about her in the *Kurhaus*. And then the unexpected happened. In this way:

Pitou was discharged.

Few things could have surprised him more, and, to tell the truth, few things could have troubled him less. "It is better to starve in Paris than grow fat in Holland," he observed. He jingled his capital in his trousers pocket, in fancy savored his dinner cooking at *Le Faisan D'Or*, and sped from the piano shop as if it had been on fire.

The clock pointed to a quarter to six as Nicolas Pitou, composer, emerged from the *Gare du Nord*, and, lightly swinging the valise that contained his

wardrobe, proceeded to look for a lodging. He had the luck to find his former room vacant. He kissed the *concierge* ardently—which took her breath away, since she was ill favored and most disagreeable—fared sumptuously for one franc fifty at *Le Faisan D'Or*, where he narrated adventures abroad that surpassed *De Rougemont's*—and went to *La Coupole*.

And there, wedged among the crowd in the cheap seats, the poor fellow looked across the theater at the triumphant woman he had invented—and fell in love with her.

One would have said there was more than the width of the theater between them—one would have said the distance was interminable. Who in the audience could suspect that Florozonde would have been unknown but for a boy among the *bourgeoise* upstairs?

Yes, he fell in love—with her beauty, her grace, perhaps also with the circumstances. The theater rang with plaudits; the curtain hid her; and he went out, perspiring. He could not hope to speak to her to-night, but he was curious to see her when she left. He decided that on the morrow he would call upon *De Fronsac*, whom she doubtless knew now, and ask him for an introduction. Promising himself this, he reached the stage door, where *De Fronsac*, with trembling limbs, stood giving thanks for his self-control.

"My friend!" cried Pitou, enthusiastically, "how rejoiced I am to meet you!" and nearly wrung his hand off.

"*Aie!* Gently!" expostulated *De Fronsac*, writhing. "*Aie, aie!* I did not know you loved me so much. So you are back from Sweden, eh?"

"Yes. I have not been there, but why should we argue about geography? What were you doing as I came up—reciting your poems? By the way, I have a favor to ask; I want you to introduce me to Florozonde."

"Never!" answered the poet, firmly. "I have too much affection for you. I have just resolved not to see her again myself. Besides, I thought you knew her in the circus?"

"I never spoke to her there—I simply

admired her from the plank. Come, take me inside and present me."

"It is impossible," persisted De Fronsac. "I tell you I will not venture near her any more. Also she is coming out—that is her coupé you see waiting."

She came out as he spoke, and, affecting not to recognize him, moved rapidly toward the carriage. But this would not do for Pitou at all.

"Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, and sweeping his hat nearly to the pavement. "Yes, well?" she said, sharply, turning.

"I have just begged my friend, De Fronsac, to present me to you, and he feared you might not pardon his presumption. May I implore you to pardon mine?"

She smiled. There was the instant in which neither the man nor the woman knows who will speak next, so what is to be said—the instant on which destinies hang. Pitou seized it.

"Mademoiselle, I returned to France only this evening. All the journey my thought has been to see you as soon as I arrived!"

"Your friend," she said, with a scornful glance toward De Fronsac, who sauntered gracefully away, "would warn you that you are rash."

"I am not afraid of his warning."

"Are you not afraid of me?"

"Afraid only that you will banish me too soon."

"*Mon Dieu!* then you must be the bravest man in Paris," she said.

"At any rate, I am the luckiest for the moment."

Now, it was a delightful change to Florozonde to meet a man who was not alarmed by her; and it pleased her to show De Fronsac that his cowardice had not left her inconsolable. She laughed loud enough for him to hear.

"I ought not to be affording you the luck," she answered. "I have friends waiting for me at the Café Anglais."

"I expected some such blow," said Pitou. "And how can I suppose you will disappoint your friends in order to sup with me at the Faisan D'Or, instead?"

"The——?" She was puzzled.

"Faisan D'Or."

"I do not know it."

"Nor would your coachman. We should walk there—and our supper would cost three francs, wine included."

"Is it an invitation?"

"It is a prayer."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Nicolas Pitou."

"Of Paris?"

"Of 'Bohemia.'"

"What do you do in it?"

"Hunger, and make music."

"Unsuccessful?"

"Not to-night."

"Take me to the Faisan D'Or," she said, and sent the carriage away.

De Fronsac, looking back as they departed, was distressed to see the young man risking his life.

At the Faisan D'Or their entrance made a sensation. She removed her cloak, and Pitou arranged it over two chairs. Then she threw her gloves out of the way in the bread basket, and the waiter and the proprietor and all the family did homage to her toilette.

"Who would have supposed——" she smiled, and her smile forgot to be mysterious.

"That the restaurant would be so proud?"

"That's a trifle—that I should be supping with you in it. Tell me, you had no hope of this on your journey? It was true about your journey, eh?"

"Oh, really! No, how could I hope? I went round after your dance simply to see you closer; and then I met De Fronsac; and then——"

"And then you were very cheeky. Answer! Why do I interest you? Because of what they say of me?"

"Not altogether."

"What, then?"

"Because you are so beautiful. Answer! Why did you come to supper with me? To annoy some one else?"

"Partly, perhaps."

"And the other reason?"

"Because you were not frightened of me. Are you sure you are not frightened? Oh, remember, remember your horrible fate if I should like you too much!"

"It would be a thumping advertisement for you," said Pitou. "Let me urge you to try to secure it."

"Reckless boy!" she laughed. "Pour out some more wine. Oh! it is good, this! It is like old times. The strings of onions on the dear, dirty walls, and the *serviettes* that are so nice and damp! It was in restaurants like this, if my salary was paid, I used to sup on fête days."

"And if it was not paid?"

"I supped in imagination. My dear, I have had a cigarette for a supper, and the grass for a bed. I have tramped by the caravan while the stars faded, and breakfasted on the drum in the tent. And you—on a bench in the Champs Elysées, eh?"

"It has occurred."

"And you watched the sun rise, and made music, and wished *you* could rise, too? I must hear your music some day. You shall write me a dance. Is it agreed?"

"The contract is already stamped," said Pitou.

"I am glad I met you—it is the best supper I have had in Paris. Why are you calculating the expenses on the back of the bill of fare?"

"I am not. I am composing your dance," said Pitou; "don't speak for a

minute; it will be sublime! Also it will be a souvenir when you have gone."

But she did not go for a long while. It was late when they left the Faisan D'Or, still talking—and there was always more to say. By this time Pitou did not merely love her beauty—he adored the woman. As for Florozonde, she no longer merely loved his courage—she approved the man.

Listen, he was young, fervid, and an artist! He proposed before they reached her doorstep, and she accepted him.

Their attachment was the talk of the town, and everybody waited to hear that Pitou had killed himself. (His name was widely known at last.) But weeks and months went by, Florozonde's protracted season came to an end, and still he looked radiantly well. Pitou was the most unpopular man in Paris.

In the Rue Dauphine, one day, he met De Fronsac.

"So you are still alive!" snarled the poet.

"Never better," declared Pitou. "It turns out," he added, confidentially, "there was nothing in that story—it was all fudge."

"Evidently! I must congratulate you," said De Fronsac, looking bombshells.



## THE TOOTH OF TIME

THE sorrow of the grave is not its green,  
 And all the salt tears on its violet;  
 But the long seasons bringing gray neglect,  
 When joyous grasses smooth the little mound,  
 When leaf by leaf the tree of sorrow wanes,  
 And on the urn unseen the tarnish comes,  
 And tears are not so bitter as they were!  
 Time sings so low to our bereaved ears,—  
 So softly breathes, that bud by falling bud  
 The garden of fond Grief all empty lies,  
 And unregretted dip the languid oars  
 Of Charon thro' the gloom, and then are gone!

ARTHUR STRINGER.

# The Confessions of a Club Woman

[By M. H. Vorse



MAY as well confess at once that I am an ambitious person. I desire to be popular with everyone; I love approval; I wish to lead. I suppose I love what is called power, and because my little world is small, its conquest has seemed to me none the less worth while.

I live in a New England town of between four and six thousand inhabitants. We boast a theological seminary and a number of greenhouses and nurseries; and instead of saloons on each corner, church steeples rear themselves. We have also a society of stiff-necked aristocrats whose arrogant humility is greater than any other pride I have ever encountered. The social desolation of a New England town of this kind a score of years ago would be hard to describe to anyone who had not experienced it. In those days none of the young people danced; families ate in silence and solitude; asking a neighbor to tea was preceded by a cleaning of the entire house. The gloom was added to by the number of ministers' and missionaries' derelicts which formed a large part of the society.

This was the environment in which marriage plunged me, like a kitten into a pond. To my surprise, I found that we were not considered as belonging to "the best people." I come from a good Virginia family, but neither my husband nor I had ancestors who had been scalped by the Indians, nor were we related to Emerson or even to Channing or Alcott, as most of the faculty seemed to be. Then, too, my husband's money told against me

It was some time before I knew everyone, for people called on strangers in Thornton because "it was their Christian duty"—it took several years for them all to perform this duty toward me. The last one to call was Miss Emma Kimball, a spare woman predestined to spinsterhood. I had the sickening feeling that with her, as with many others, I had not made a good impression.

I made a mistake seven years long of trying to soften the stiff social muscles of the town, with the result that I was considered a frivolous, worldly woman who cared only for society.

After seven years of this futile kind of entertaining, I awoke one day to a definite sense of my position in Thornton. By reading, Heaven knows how many, dreary papers in the Friday Afternoon Literary Society, I had achieved the reputation of being "clever in a superficial way," although my gayety and flippancy deprived me of the honor of being thought intellectual. I was admitted to all the best houses of these stiff old New England dames, and to their funeral parties where lotto was played—cards were just beginning to creep in. On the other hand, people said of me: "Mrs. Gresham is so *different*;" when I was put on a church committee, one of the women remarked, cheerily: "Why, Mrs. Gresham, I didn't know *you* were a Christian!" Thornton people wagged their heads over our moderately smart carriages and our pretty house, and agreed that "money made people worldly."

I walked up the sleeping village street, still pondering over the question of social leadership, which, it seemed

to me at that time, was the only leadership possible, when a lightning-stroke of intelligence illuminated my mind.

I went home and wrote letters to various relatives about my ancestry. I looked up the one New England branch of our family in "The First Settlers of New England," and in due time obtained the gratifying information that two of my ancestors had served in the Revolutionary War.

It was then I approached the dowager known as Madame Thornton. She had false teeth and a false front, and had worn a huge bustle long after bustles had "gone out." If her people had not always been trustees, or presidents, or something in the college, Thornton would have thought her "queer." She was as flippant as I, and as worldly, and because she was a Hartley and had married a Thornton this gave her an additional luster. She fairly oozed genealogy, and was disappointed if she could not prove you to be at least a fourth cousin thrice removed.

"It's an excellent idea, my dear," she said, as I unfolded my plan. "It's a wonder I never thought of it myself—and, indeed, I did often enough. When people have called you frivolous I always told them that all you needed was a few years of Thornton. Oh, the Daughters of the American Revolution will cause a rare sifting in this town! I don't believe that Episcopalian minister's wife will be able to belong at all, with all her top-loftical pretense to family! I never cared a penny for all those Dutch traders as ancestors—I can't discover that she's in the slightest degree related to me, while even you, though from Virginia, had for a great grandmother on the female side a Holyoke—an excellent family connected with the Thorntons only three generations back. I'll ask a few ladies to tea to-morrow, and we will discuss the matter."

Eight of us gathered in Madame Thornton's rosewood parlor. Mrs. Ellery, the president's wife, and her two daughters were there. The girls had a vestal look which even matrimony failed to remove; all three had the gentle air

of distinction which belongs to those who have met with nothing but deference all their days. The Hebrew professor's wife, Mrs. Thomas, sat rigid on Mrs. Ellery's right, and two of the old families of the town were represented by Mrs. Higginbotham—formerly a Thornton—and Miss Aurelia M. Craft. Mrs. Higginbotham had the depressed appearance of a hen who had been out in the rain; Miss Craft had the militant air of a hen on a weathervane.

"Yesterday Mrs. Gresham came here to ask me why we had no chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in town, when Thornton is simply running over with the descendants of patriots," began Madame Thornton, briskly.

"You had often thought of it yourself," I interposed.

"Tut, tut, my dear," said she, kindly. "If I had, you were the one to crystallize my thoughts. I have asked you ladies to consider the matter, and goodness knows it was hard enough to pick out even a handful whose families I was sure of! You, Aurelia," she said, turning to Miss Craft, "I was sure of. I've seen your grandfather's old musket often enough, Lord knows! And your father, my dears," she said to the Ellerys, "mentions Gen. Ellery's services to his country in every baccalaureate sermon. But, mercy! What about you, Mrs. Ellery? Did you have an ancestor who fought, do you think? I guess that at that time most of your forebears were singing psalms."

"I am surprised and pleased to learn," returned Mrs. Ellery, sweetly, "that Mrs. Gresham is one of us. I always thought of her as from the South."

"Yes," chimed in Miss Aurelia Craft, shrilly. "How can *you* be a Daughter, Mrs. Gresham? Your husband's family, to my knowledge, emigrated from Canada not sixty years ago."

"What a long memory you have, Aurelia," said Madame Thornton, dryly. "I presume you can tax it still further, and recollect that there were other States besides those of New England in Revolutionary days. Mrs. Gresham has in her possession the commission of her

ancestor who fought under Washington as a colonel."

This precious document had, indeed, been sent me by a great-aunt, and, to tell the truth, I had not known of its existence more than a week.

Just then Mrs. Higginbotham, whose husband was a retired Congregational minister, piped up: "The question which I think we ought to discuss is, do we really wish or need a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in this town? Will it *help* us, do you think? Is it not encouraging too much pride of family?"

"Mercy me!" exclaimed Madame Thornton. "If you don't consider a love of one's native land helpful, I'm sure I don't know what is."

"Oh, yes; certainly, yes," fluttered Mrs. Higginbotham, who was meek enough, poor thing, having been bullied by parish after parish for thirty-five years.

"I think," said Mrs. Thomas, "that a proper respect for our ancestors is a duty which has been neglected too long by Americans."

Lofty sentiments always depressed Madame Thornton.

"Well," she said, "now that we have all expressed an edifying remark apiece, let's go on to the practical side of the question."

What a searching of family records occurred in Thornton! The genealogical craze had not then reached its height, and many of the proudest found they were not eligible. Madame Thornton, the Ellerys, Aurelia Craft and I formed a Brahmin caste of those who knew all about their families, and did not have to "look up." I made a good deal of capital out of this.

We kept the membership very select, and a number of ladies qualified to join were quietly overlooked by the high-well-born Daughters of the American Revolution of Thornton.

In two years I began to be tired of death of presenting flags to school children and talking about my illustrious family. I noticed all our families grew more illustrious day by day. I felt the need of new activities, so I was mad

enough, when Miss Emma M. Kimball organized a local society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, without including me in it. It was a close corporation, composed entirely of Congregational ladies; and I am an Episcopalian, which has hindered me in my club work not a little. I retaliated by organizing a Village Improvement Society, and made my poor husband give a drinking fountain to the town. Then I thought how I could kill that old S. P. C. A. which I didn't belong to. Presently Mrs. Higginbotham got up a Juvenile Band, with buttons—at my suggestion—and next we knew officious young ones were telling people at every turn that their dog's collar was too tight, or that the horse needed a drink.

Then Madame Thornton called it "The Society for the Cultivation of Impertinent Asses"; and Aurelia M. Craft made an indignant call on Emma Kimball, in the course of which she is reported to have said: "If I catch your nephew inspecting my hen yard again to see if my fowls are properly fed, I'll *spank* him, Emma; yes, I will!"

So the S. P. C. A. languished and died. We revived it as an activity of the Women's Club—I was chairman of the committee.

After three peaceful, snobbish years, there came a tremendous shake-up among the D. A. R.'s. The Congregational minister's wife, Mrs. Allen Cotton, appeared at a meeting nervous and flurried. After the opening prayer—in Thornton even bottles were opened with prayer—"I have a proposition to put before you," she said. She spoke in her usual prayer-meeting manner. "Could not the club broaden its scope with benefit to itself and to others?"

"I personally will subscribe to no more American flags," said Madame Thornton, with decision. "We've put flags to waving on every place a flag could wave, except the barber's pole."

"I was thinking of the club membership," said Mrs. Allen Cotton. "There are a number of nice people outside the club, who are entitled to belong, and I hear there is feeling among them. They accuse us of being snobbish—"



"And so we are, so we are!" cackled Madame Thornton, with satisfaction.

"Whom had you considered as possible members?" inquired the elder Ellery vestal.

"Mr. Chapin's young wife has, to tell the truth, broached the matter to me," said Mrs. Allen Cotton, desperately.

"Not the *butcher's wife*!" gasped Mrs. Thomas.

"The *butcher's* wife, really?" enunciated the Ellerys.

"Of all things, the *butcher's wife*!" chuckled Madame Thornton.

Mrs. Allen Cotton's delicate face flushed pink. "Mrs. Chapin is a Christian woman," she protested. "We meet her on that ground in the church work, and accept her money for our church."

"We do not all accept her money," said Elizabeth Ellery, gently. She attended the seminary church.

"I have yet to learn that the seminary church and the village church are of different denominations," said Mrs. Cotton, with dignity.

It was here I took a flying leap into the unknown, and imperiled all I had gained for a future and problematical advantage.

"Ladies," I said, "I can see no reason for the exclusion of so many of our fellow townswomen. Up to this time we have tacitly ignored the claims of many of our neighbors, and I am sure that no true work of patriotism can result from a chapter run on such lines. I will join Mrs. Cotton in putting up Mrs. Chapin for membership."

The club was visibly impressed. The Ellery ladies, taking the stand that an Ellery could not stoop, sided with us, and so did Mrs. Higginbotham, who was sincere and without guile.

The effect of my little speech was somewhat marred by Madame Thornton exclaiming: "Alicia Gresham, I'd like to know what you're up to!" But then the dear old soul turned around and sided with us; "just to stir 'em up a bit," she told me afterward.

There were several of the faculty ladies with faces as set as adamant, and I knew beforehand that the cause of the

butcher's wife was lost; but from that time forward we admitted more members.

Next day I called on Mrs. Chapin. It was my first political act.

The great idea of a Woman's Club had formed itself in my mind. I unfolded my plans to my husband. "A good politician was lost in you, Allie," he said. "Go ahead, and I'll put up the campaign funds."

I will say here that I was not actuated by love of my fellow-creatures, or by any desire to "enlarge their lives," or to "broaden their outlooks," or to "bring the women of Thornton closer together," or by any of the things about which I have so often spoken in public. But I worked hard, as my husband says, "for my own pocket all the time," though I wanted nothing but glory. I have always been what is called a feminine woman, and as I had been very successful in making my husband happy and yet getting everything I wanted, I did not see why the same principles should not apply in club work.

I am proud even now of the nice little piece of management I did in founding the Woman's Club. I went around for weeks dropping a word here, suggesting there, making calls on all the women I knew, and at last the Woman's Club of Thornton burst, as it seemed, into life spontaneously. A number of representative women were its sponsors, while I sat modestly in the background. My name had never once appeared, yet I founded the club; all the same, I thought people would recognize how much work I had done, and when the club officers were elected, with Mrs. Roger Thurlow as president, and I was not among them, I was bitterly disappointed.

I shall never forget that first meeting! Though I had lived for ten years in Thornton, I realized as never before that I was in darkest New England. Sixty of the seventy-five charter members were present. Most of them were middle-aged. Although they came from many walks of life, they had, in common, a certain implacable refinement; they presented an appearance which made

me think of nothing so much as a poem about a "stern and rock-bound coast." You could have read the whole history of New England in their faces; and what hard work it was to get any of them to speak! Their tongues moved like doors on rusty hinges. Well, I know too much of the club business to have the overwhelming respect for it which some have, but it has oiled the hinges.

It was at this first meeting I realized that Emma Kimball was an enemy to be feared. Her father had been a much-beloved minister of the First Congregational Church. By all accounts, he had been a broad-minded and public-spirited man, and, in his daughter's opinion, when he died all chance for progress ceased. She and her faction were the bitter dregs of the wholesome cup of Puritanism. They looked at the world through cold, henlike eyes; they seemed to me to be opposed to everything gay and wholesome, opposed to everything new, and, worst of all, opposed to me. In their minds, and in Emma Kimball's, I summed up the monster, "Worldliness." My nice clothes were the world's livery; my gayety and friendliness, a snare. I traced most of the prejudice of "First Church" people against me to the Kimball faction. Miss Kimball was fatally sincere in her belief that I was a "bad influence in the town," and she was the only other systematic politician besides myself in the club. We were ranged North against South; the nineteenth century against the seventeenth.

You may be sure that, dominated by Miss Kimball and the faculty ladies, the club embarked on no practical work. We went in heavily for literature and history, commonly as far removed from modern days as possible, except for afternoons given to celebrating the American poets, whom I soon grew to hate.

The club flourished; it gave occupation to the unemployed, and there you have in a nutshell the cause of the great success of woman's clubs.

Everyone was happy, uttering sophomoric platitudes and listening to dreadful papers, and I was happy, too, in

my own way; for even a little power is sweet, and it interested me to see how quickly my suggestions were taken up. How soon, for instance, it began to be whispered about that Mrs. Thurlow's dynasty ran the club too much in the interest of the seminary set, as, indeed, it did. I have found that it never pays to slander people; pointing out their weaknesses is far more effective.

When I had planted these seeds of discord, I sprang the question of parliamentary law on the club.

"Mrs. Smith, the new professor's wife," I announced to Aurelia Craft, "says that all women are unparliamentary—I believe her husband comes to us from a Western college."

"Those Western women lack depth. We will show her that New England women are parliamentary enough," said Aurelia, grimly. And she departed mysteriously—"to visit cousins in Boston," she said. In three weeks she returned, saturated with parliamentary law, as if she had had it poured into her with a funnel and a force pump. Aurelia M. Craft, in spite of her sixty years, was as tough as an old oak tree, and she fairly pelted her bitter acorns of parliamentary law at the clubwomen. Soon we were "up" in it, and spent afternoons in blocking the vote and questioning the chair's decision, and had orgies of altering the constitution. It took us four business meetings to change the name of the club from "The Thornton Woman's Club" to "The Club of the Women of Thornton." Many hold to this day, especially the Ellery faction, that the double possessive is inelegant and incorrect. It was a terrible battle which won the change, and there are dark hints that the new name was put through by Emma Kimball at an extra business meeting when there were very few people there.

These quarrels amused me quite as much as those afternoons devoted to such questions as "How shall we keep our boys off the street," or to papers like that one on "Liszt and his Music"—read in a faltering voice by Mrs. Higginbotham—a paper which contained the words that convulsed my husband:

"I will now pass over the entire private life of Liszt in silence. It will be enough when I say that it was not what we are accustomed to in our New England men."

My husband was my escape valve during this time. I should have smothered in my own mealy-mouthed speeches if I hadn't had him to be honest with and tell the truth to.

"Tell me, Allie," he asked one day, "what are you accomplishing, besides giving, as you say, 'work to the unemployed'?"

"Judge for yourself," I said, and handed him the club program.

"Tuesday, January 22d, Bird Song and Poetry," he read. "Mrs. Bangs. That's the plumber's wife. Discussion: What our birds do for us. What we might do for them." I see you are studying geology, with Miss Chug, the baker's daughter, as chairman of the committee. That's little Minnie Chug, who used to leave the cast-iron biscuits, warranted durable, at the back door. My poor Allie, did marriage bring you to this?"

He ran over the program rapidly. "Emerson's Influence in the Far West. Discussion: How can a woman best carry Emerson's teaching into her private life?"

"Not a useful or practical thing in the lot," he commented. "What do you get out of it?"

"People are saying about me: 'What a nice woman Mrs. Gresham is; how natural and not at all aggressive,'" I explained. "But I want to run the club. I want to be its president, though I don't seem a bit nearer it than I was before."

For although Mrs. Thurlow was overthrown, she had been replaced by another of the faculty ladies.

"The trouble with you is," said my husband, "that you are amateurish in your methods. Take my advice and work up a club machine. Notice who the leaders of the different sets are; get up a ring. Madame Thornton runs the old ladies' mutual admiration society. You've got her, cold; you pay her in amusement."

"And in affection," I added, for I am very fond of old lady Thornton.

It is true that you pay your way in a club, whether you are aware of it or not.

Aurelia Craft I paid in friendship, and with a furthering of her views. Our minister's wife, Mrs. Fitch, ran our missionary and sewing society, with a keenness and force that contrasted with the shiftless, lazy ways of the rector himself; I paid her by the unfailing support I gave her tiresome husband and the money I contributed liberally to the parish. But successful as I was in getting the esteem of my fellow townspeople and in getting more and more influence in a certain way, I could not ignore the fact that I was marking time. Emma Kimball's adherents presented a blank front of unbroken disapproval, as each successive election proved; and I felt that nothing short of a miracle could carry me further.

During five years, Miss Kimball and I fought with varying success. I pulled forward, she backward. I blocked her society for collecting old sermons; she destroyed my current-event department of the club. I prevented her from bringing too religious an element into the club; she saw to it that a dancing class under club auspices proposed by me was frowned down. In all this time, it is instructive to note, we never came to any open fight in the club, and we never answered each other's objections in the meetings. Nevertheless, Miss Kimball managed to keep me out of the presidency or vice-presidency.

Sometimes I should have been thankful for open war, for the trouble with club politics is that you have to pretend you are sincere and unselfish. I could not say to the president of the Association for the Sending of Easter Garments to the Indians ("I don't know why they don't send 'em *bunnits*, and be done with it," Madame Thornton commented; "they'd enjoy 'em twice as much as being bothered with *clothes*!") I could not go to the president of this association, and say: "I'll get up a subscription for those Easter garments, if you and your association will vote my club ticket."

No, I must pretend to "take an interest," and make myself agreeable, and then go hot-foot to the Episcopalian Indian Missionary Society and do some donating there. So you can see how much time and trouble is involved in getting up a deal in a women's club. Then it takes a nice sense to know which of the women really feel as they think, and which of the others can be bribed—always keeping up the decencies—and just how far.

Just as I was well under way with organizing my little machine at the end of the club's sixth year, came the great cataclysm which rent Thornton to its foundations. There was a company formed for putting a trolley through Thornton's sacred village street.

At the time of which I write few towns except those near the big cities had trolleys. The conservative element throughout New England fought the "electrics" as a former generation fought steam.

The club met soon after the threatening of this danger. I have never seen Thornton so excited. The women fairly buzzed, until they were called to order by Aurelia Craft, who, as vice-president, had the chair—the president's children were down with the chicken-pox.

"Madame President," said Mrs. Butler, after the preliminary business had been dispatched, "I move that the program for to-day be waived—I am reading a paper on the religious orders of Germany in the twelfth century, and there is a discussion: What practical lessons can we draw from these orders?—and that the advisability of the electrics for Thornton be discussed."

"I second the motion," said Emma Kimball. We went through the usual form for a vote.

"Madame President," said Emma Kimball, "I move that the club joins in a unanimous protest against this dreadful trolley!" Her face was distressed, the idea of a trolley, one could see, was terrible to hear.

"Madame President," objected Mrs. Belden, a shrewd old woman, "I wanter suggest that as a number of our fore-

most business men have indorsed this plan, seems to me we'd do well to appoint a committee to investigate the pros and cons before the club makes any official protests."

"Madame President," said Miss Kimball, sourly, "I have made a motion to the effect that the club makes a unanimous protest."

The motion was seconded, and a vote was taken and carried by a trifling majority.

"Madame President," said Mrs. Church—whose husband was interested in the trolley—"I want to know if Miss Kimball's motion didn't call for a unanimous vote of the club? Now, we didn't get a unanimous vote—"

Mrs. Belden was quick to seize her advantage.

"Madame President," she said, "I move Miss Kimball's motion gets laid on the table, as it's rediculous to have a unanimous protest which not all the club want. Emma, why don't you get up one of your long petitions for everyone to sign?"

We quickly shelved the protest question, and passed Mrs. Belden's motion providing for a committee to investigate, as she said, the "pros and cons" of the trolley question. I motioned that, to save time, the chair appoint the committee; and, thereupon, Aurelia selected a committee she knew I would like, and left Emma Kimball out in the cold.

"Now, Aurelia," said Madame Thornton, who scorned all parliamentary forms, "let's spend the rest of the afternoon expressing our individual views. I don't care a fiddlestick if electrics are helpful or not, and I know that's what Emma Kimball's dying to talk about. Do we want 'em? And have we got to have 'em if we want 'em or not? That's what I want to know. I, for one, say I *won't have* one of those clangy, noisy things sailing past my door, under my nose!"

"I hear," said Mrs. Higginbotham, "*they run on Sundays.*"

"If they'd run only on Sunday I wouldn't mind," said the godless old lady, "then I wouldn't have to get my horse out to get to church!"

"Of course," said Mrs. Thomas, who was now president of the Village Improvement Society, "the village street will never be the same if they put it through. The beauty of our town will be gone forever!"

"Well," said Mrs. Belden, "I get tired of nothin' but beauty. I been brought up on beauty. I think 'twould seem mighty cheerful to see the electrics in Thornton."

The president of the W. C. T. U. arose and spoke in a singsong tone: "It's all very well for Mrs. Belden to speak of cheerfulness. *Her* boys are all dead, and her girls married. But are we *mothers*, with young boys growing into manhood, going to allow the electrics in our town, which for five cents will take our sons to Granby, where there are gin mills and drinking hells on every corner? Are we going to open the door to temptation to the young husbands of this town——"

"They ran over a baby carriage in Brooklyn last week," Mrs. Thomas interrupted.

"I'm sure I ain't a bit afraid that a good boy'd sneak over to Granby like that," said Mrs. Church, with some warmth. "I used to live in Granby, and none of my folks ever drunk a drop."

The president of the W. C. T. U. made an impromptu temperance address to which no one listened, for everyone was talking at once, and above the uproar one could catch sentences like:

"What good would a trolley do Thornton, anyway?"

"It'll wake us up."

"Our trees will have to go."

"Children all killed."

"Terrible accidents."

"Can't never be made to pay."

"We got along in Thornton two hundred years without any trolley; what do we want o' one now?"

Aurelia Craft remembered parliamentary procedure, and with a gasp called the club to order; and a sort of ashamed silence fell on The Club of the Women of Thornton, who had never in all their repressed lives been so untrammelled in speech. Then Madame Thornton said:

"If this is a sample of what a trolley would do for Thornton, I want one. I never enjoyed a meeting so much in my life. Well—good-by, Aurelia. I think we'd all better be going home to tea."

"I second the motion for adjournment," I said, gravely, for we all accept Madame Thornton's informalities.

"Of course, Alicia, I know well enough which way the wind blows with you," said Madame Thornton, as we went out together. She lowered her voice to a shrill whisper: "There are a lot of our First Church people very much in favor of the electrics. You hunt 'em up and you'll rout Emma Kimball, and be our club president yet! Though Lord knows why you want to!" It was the first hint I had that she knew what my ambitions were.

I felt by that time I was well enough liked to come out in my own colors, and I appeared boldly for trolley and progress. I made what amounted to a house to house canvass, and I learned then of what value personal friends are in politics; a number of women whom I expected to find much opposed to the trolley idea came over to my view of the matter only because they liked me, as they knew I liked them.

Our committee, after investigating the effect of the electrics on other towns, reported favorably; but the fight was long and bitter, and it was two years before the first trolley carried us to Granby.

Miss Kimball stirred up all the conservative element against me, but I didn't care. I really believed in the trolley as a good thing, and it was fun to be in a live fight; for the women in Thornton exercised a big political influence, and not a few elections have been really lost or won in the homes of the voters before even the polls were open.

About this time the Rev. Allen Cotton, who had sided against the innovation, received a call to another parish, and was succeeded by young Eleazer Hartley, great-great-grandson of the Hartley of Indian fame, and he preached a sermon on the blessing of the trolley and about God's great gift

of electricity to the nineteenth century, which calmed the spirits of people like gentle Mrs. Higginbotham, who had been torn between her fear of the "evil this might bring to Thornton" and her dislike of disagreeing with me.

Of course, now no one would part with the electrics. They have made a new thing of life in Thornton. Poor old women who never "got out anywhere" now go skiting merrily all over the country, our children go on picnics and to school—I needn't enlarge upon what these useful conveyances have accomplished. The Woman's Club was proud of having indorsed it. Madame Thornton rode up and down on them all day. Nor did Miss Emma Kimball eschew them.

During the first two years of the trolley, it seemed to me that Emma Kimball's attitude to me softened. She even came to my husband once or twice to ask for flowers for some charitable purpose.

It was three years ago she called on me solemnly. "Mrs. Gresham," she said, "I feel it is due you that I make a confession. I have misjudged you. I was as wrong about you as I was about the electrics. You have both taught me a lesson. Aurelia Craft has always told me I was mistaken, but in opposing you, I felt that I was acting for the best." She had recited her little lesson as something that she had rehearsed, then she lost her lines. "I'm real sorry"—she floundered—"I don't like to be unjust to anybody. We look at life so differently—"

I leaned over and took her hand impulsively. Twenty years in New England, and I have these Southern impulses still!

"Hush, now, Miss Kimball," I said; "don't you say another word—I don't wonder you didn't like lots of things I did. And it's lovely of you to come, and—and I wish we could be friends."

"I don't see anything to interfere," said Miss Kimball. She had regained her usual manner, but two pink spots were in her cheeks. "But I want to say that all these years that you must have known I disapproved of you, you've

acted with a Christian forbearance I couldn't have shown. It wasn't *you* I disliked, Mrs. Gresham, it was what I thought you represented."

I can tell you I felt ashamed. Naturally as good politician as I, she had been working faithfully for principle, and never dreamed that I was merely working for myself. She had been on the losing side. The sweep of events which had made her lose had also made her see me as I am, and even better. Many an old bulwark of New England prejudice has been overthrown in the last twenty years, and Miss Kimball's prejudice against me was one.

"It's been hard for me to make up my mind to this. If I hadn't been so proud-spirited," she said, "I would have come long ago."

"You needn't have explained at all," I said; "you could merely have shown your friendliness—I would have understood."

"Mrs. Gresham," she said, "that wouldn't have been *honest*. It was my *duty*."

"I'll never try to be president," I told my husband. "I'll never go in for politics again."

But before the week was out I was on the warpath, quashing a Committee for the Presentation to the Poor of Potted Plants, which somehow sprang up.

Miss Emma Kimball worked with me. I might have had anything I wanted in the club after that. But in my long years of waiting—nearly ten—I had learned it was quite possible to have a great deal of influence without being president. In fact, I had learned the great lesson of politics, that "the boss always has a better time than the mayor," as my husband says, and Emma Kimball and I may be said to boss the town together. I felt so ashamed when I saw how single-minded she had been that I really meant to go out and leave the club to her, but the old habit was too strong, and people had grown into the way of coming to me about things.

And I love approval—I wish to be liked—I suppose I love what is called power.



# THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY

By Edith Macvane

## I.



IN the old days in the Convent of St. Veronica, Sister Angélique had always one word of consolation for the homesick and the doleful: "Take your pen, write down your griefs in black and white; and when you have finished your list you will find that half the blackness of the griefs will have disappeared." And so, indeed, I always found it.

Perhaps if I try the remedy again it will be as helpful to-day as in that far-off childish past.

### *The Griefs of Gabrielle.*

#### I.

I am ugly; not the *belle-laide*, the beautiful-ugly woman, whose smile is more enchanting than the most brilliant tints and the most alluring curves. My face is pale, my figure is thin and flat, my hair lacks color— Oh, yes, I am ugly; if I had not my glass to tell me so every day, I have only to remember the name by which I was known among the other young girls at the convent.

"The Little Caterpillar," they called me. The name was given me by the beautiful Diane d'Alyncourt, the queen of the school; because, as she said: "You are such a long, thin sort of brown creature, and your hair sticks out so stiffly from your head."

How have I sinned, either in my past life or in my present, that of all the women in the world this woman should be now, by marriage, my cousin?

#### 2.

I am of inferior birth to my husband.

My dear old grandfather sold tripe in a small shop in the Old Street of Monsieur le Prince. Meanwhile, my husband's grandfather was chamberlain to Charles the Tenth. It is seldom that I am allowed to forget this fact.

The reason that I achieved this lordly marriage is because my father accumulated a magnificent fortune in chocolate, thirty millions, no less. When I was a young girl my mother used often to say to me, when I was then unable to understand: "My child, as you have nothing but Chocolate in your veins, it is necessary that you marry Blood."

And accordingly, five years ago, when I was nineteen years old, I became the wife of Remy-Philippe-Etienne-Marie, Comte d'Alyncourt. His cousin Diane, whose insolent beauty had made my school life miserable, was the bridesmaid who bore my train to the altar.

#### 3.

My husband's family, who found my *dot* of ten millions very convenient to rebuild the old Hôtel d'Alyncourt and re-establish the prosperity of the house, found, on the other hand, that my manners and breeding were quite insufficient to support the dignity to which I had risen. Since the day of my return from my honeymoon, the dowager countess has never ceased to despair of me—"Hold, how shall we ever form her, this little *chocolatière*!"

All this, however, I could have borne in meekness had it not been to "my cousin Diane" that I was constantly referred for a model of all that I should be.

#### 4.

When my little Philippe was born, I thought that his coming would mean a

sealing of love between his father and me—so I tried hard to fulfill to the last degree my duties as a mother; and in spite of the horror of the dowager, who found my conduct no better than that of a charcoal-burner's wife, I insisted on taking care of my little one myself.

How was I to know that this devotion to our child would first weary, then disgust, my husband, so that at the end of three years I should have lost his love?

5.

For my fifth grief, what can I write? At last the expected has come to pass. The ravishing Diane has stolen my husband's heart from me.

Last night I sat alone with my baby by the nursery fire. I had dismissed his nurse, and took him in my lap to say his little prayer. He says his prayer every night now, the treasure!

I was trying very hard to be cheerful, for the next day was Christmas Eve, and I had planned a tree for Pippi, with candles and stars upon it. But I knew that we should pass our Christmas alone, Pippi and I—except, perhaps, for a visit from the dowager, who scorns me but tries to do her duty by her grandchild. And in spite of myself I could not but remember our happy holidays at home, papa, mamma and I, before they achieved this grand marriage for me; and all my dear old friends, who dare not visit Madame the Comtesse.

And also I remembered the first December after I was married. It was the month of our honeymoon, and Remy and I celebrated our Christmas in the sunshine of the Midi.

There was a knock upon the door, and my husband entered. *Mon Dieu*, how handsome he was in his evening dress, tall and straight like a king! I started in surprise.

"My dear," he said, with the cool deference which has during the past year supplanted the ancient tenderness between us—"my dear, our cousin Diane is below asking me to escort her to the opera."

As he had been her escort on a hun-

dred occasions during the past year, I could not understand why she had taken the pains to send me news of her triumph on this particular evening. So I merely nodded in silence and bent over the child whose warm head lay upon my bosom.

"Papa, papa!" cried little Pippi, holding out his arms.

Remy stooped and patted the child's cheek. How weak we are! I own to you my heart fluttered and grew faint with joy as my husband bent over me. I looked up to him with a sudden tenderness, but his next words froze the impulse before it had time to take shape in words.

"The reason I have come here to annoy you," he said, carelessly, "is that Diane has had the misfortune to tear her dress as she came up the stairs. Will you have the goodness to send your maid to her assistance?"

So this is why he had come to me—to me, his wife!—to ask my services for the woman whom I felt instinctively to be my rival. I give you my word, it seemed for the moment as though the knowledge were too much for me. I bent my head down silently over the bunch of flannel and yellow curls that lay heavy and warm upon my knees. A soft hand shot up and touched my hair.

"Mamma sayin' her pwayers," observed Pippi.

There was a moment's silence, while I strove to fight back my tears.

"Pippi say his pwayers, too!" cried the little voice. "Pippi say his pwayers to papa!" and he kicked and scrambled upon my lap. There was a soft tap upon the door, and a gay laugh. "May I come in?" cried the voice of Diane.

Remy sprang forward to open the door for her, and she swept in, blond perfect and dazzling, her white lace cloak thrown open and her pale blue dress dragging over the carpet behind her. Little Pippi gurgled in delight at her beauty, and his eyes winked before the diamonds that flashed upon her white neck. Diamonds—never had I known before that Diane possessed such stones as these!

"Poor little Gaby!" she cried. "Poor

little mother, moping here along with her baby!"

I tried to smile a greeting, but I felt myself quenched and overshadowed by her splendor—never had I seen her so magnificent, for her husband, the Marquis de Luz, was far from rich, and she had no *dot*; but to-night she appeared embroidered, furred, jeweled like an operatic queen.

"Dod'ma!" cried Pippi, and stretched out his hand to snatch the glittering jeweled bag which swung from her hand. "Dod'ma!" he cried again. (She was his godmother, alas! It was at the dowager's request.)

Remy rang for the maid, and Diane came and bent over the smiling child.

"That little Pippi grows more beautiful every day," she observed, "and more like——"

"More like his mother, dear Diane," I responded. "Thanks for the compliment, my dear!"

She laughed. "Soon, I suppose," she cried, "we shall find him on our hands, another little Caterpillar!"

That wicked little nickname! Did she not know how its very syllables, with their tradition of my ugliness, cut into my heart? But, oh, of course she knew, of course she knew! And what retort was there for me to make except words of anger which I disdained to utter? Little Pippi stretched out his arms to the lovely face that bent over him.

"Pippi say his pwayers!" he cried. "Pippi want to say his pwayers to dod-mamma."

My arms fell limp. Somehow it hurt me to think that my little son was turning toward the same beautiful brilliance that had dazzled his father's eyes. And that, too, with the tender, sacred words that I had taught him.

She stooped and took the child in her white arms. At that instant Remy turned from the door where he had been waiting for the maid, and his glance fell upon us, Diane and me. In the look in his eyes, as in a mirror, I saw the picture that we made; Gabrielle, with straight dim hair and dowdy dress, thin, sallow and sad—and Diane standing with the child in her arms, her pale blue

draperies falling about her, a rosy, smiling madonna.

"Pippi 'oves dod'ma," observed the baby, and with his fat, uncertain little hand he timidly touched her shining hair. Remy smiled tenderly upon them. I shrank back into my seat. The maid knelt on the floor with needle and thread in her hand, and busied herself with the damaged ruffles of Madame the Marquise.

"Pippi say his pwayers now," said the child, and wriggled himself into a kneeling position in her slippery satin lap. How awkward and unpracticed in motherhood were the hands that steadied him, how angelically clear and deep the blue eyes that shone down upon his little head!

"Upon my word," observed Diane, with a laugh, "this is a sweet little trick. I think I shall have to teach it to my little boy some day before he gets too big!"

I glanced at Remy to see what effect this remark would have upon him. The prayers of a child—the dancing steps of a dog—are they both, then, alike, tricks to amuse an idle moment? But Remy was gazing with his soul in his eyes at the two golden heads which swayed and bent toward each other. How much more in place he looked, this lovely child, in the arms of this goddess, than in the embrace of his mother, the Little Caterpillar! All this I read in the eyes of my husband.

Pippi shut his eyes, and joined his two hands together, the tips of his fingers glued to each other with punctilious care.

"P'ease, Dod," he prayed, "'ove Pippi! P'ease 'ove papa—p'ease 'ove mamma—p'ease make ev'vybody 'ove Pippi—p'ease——" He hesitated, and then, charmed with being the center of attention, he struck out boldly to improvise a further prayer: "P'ease, Dod, 'ove dod'ma—p'ease make ev'vybody 'ove dod'ma. Amen!"

He finished his prayer with a triumphant bounce and wriggle, and a sudden snatch at the little gold bag which hung from the hand of his godmother. The clasp opened, the bag fell

upon the ground. Pippi made a wild clutch at its contents.

"Naughty Pippi!" cried his father, and stooped to recover the powder puff, the bonbon box and all the scattered treasures.

"Here, my little St. Pippi, go back to your mamma," said Diane, rising and giving the child back to me, "and many thanks for your prayers. I assure you, your godmamma has need of them!"

"But hardly," said Remy, gallantly, as he helped her on with her cloak, "of that especial prayer."

I tried to smile. I fancied that Diane's eyes sparkled with some malice, and she returned my glance. "By the way, Gaby," said she, carelessly, "are you intending to go to the ball at the English embassy to-morrow night?"

I shook my head. Why, indeed, should I go to balls to form part of the tapestry against the wall? I have been to a few balls since my marriage; and as my husband's family is not without importance, I am not left entirely alone. But, oh, the humiliation of sitting by the side of some ancient cousin of our house, while Diane passes by radiant among her court—my husband and the rest. I could not face it again—not now, not now!

"I don't think," I faltered, "that I shall be able to go."

"They say," remarked Remy, "that it is to be very amusing."

"A real old English Christmas Eve!" cried his cousin, gayly. "Evergreens, holly; what you call the *Vails* to sing, what you call the *Vassail* to drink; and mistletoe, where one can be kissed by one's best beloved. Does that not tempt you, Gaby, my dear?"

"I need no mistletoe," I replied, stung by the look of coquetry which she flung to my husband, "to win a kiss from my best beloved." And I stooped to the little face upon my bosom. "Pippi, my dear!"

The baby lips met my cheek with soft, moist sweetness. Diane broke into a peal of laughter.

"Remy, my poor cousin, it is plain that you are no longer first here!" she cried. "*Eh bien*, then, Little Caterpillar,

since you care for nothing but Pippi, I suppose you can have no objection to Remy taking me to the embassy? My husband, as you know, has no leisure to bestow on me."

"A good idea," I answered, steadily. "I should be sorry to have Remy go alone."

"Diane, remember the curtain rises at nine o'clock!" interrupted Remy, and took her arm.

"Good-night, my little saints!"

The door closed behind them, little Pippi waved his hands in glee. "Oh, pooty, pooty!" he cried.

One little pink hand was clinched over a small package loosely wrapped in white paper, and a glimmer of gold shone from within. "What have you there, my cabbage?" I asked, and tried to open the little fingers.

"No, no," he cried, and wriggled away.

It was a piece of jewelry he held, I could see that—something, it suddenly flashed upon me, that had tumbled from the little reticule that Diane had dropped upon the floor.

Was it not wicked of me? I was so glad that she should suffer some loss—after all the loss that she had inflicted upon me!—that I dropped the soft fist and let the gold ornament remain in the little pirate's grip. I am afraid that I hoped it was valuable—very, very valuable!

So I sang little Pippi to sleep, while his head drooped upon my shoulder.

He does not find me low-born, or stupid, or ugly. He feels the sincerity of my love, and that is enough for him. With him at least I have not failed.

Dear little Pippi!

## II.

This morning, after my early breakfast with Pippi, I commanded my carriage, and we drove together, to see Fanchon. Not to buy clothes, for I have ever been indifferent to what I wear, as it always seemed to me that a face and figure like mine are only made ridiculous by elaborate dressing; but to get some little tunics and blouses that

I have had made for Pippi, and to select Christmas presents from the stock of toys and *bijouterie* which Fanchon lays in for her patrons. She exclaimed when she saw me: "Madame is wearing a dress that I made for her two years ago, and a hat——"

I laughed, but a little sadly, and went on examining little carts and guns.

"If madame would allow me—me, Fanchon—just once to dress her with my own hands!"

This was an old dispute between Fanchon and me; as though even Fanchon could work a miracle!

So I went down to my carriage, followed by attendants laden with parcels, and Pippi and I drove home. Whenever I glanced from the window, his little hands poked holes through the wrappings of the parcels. Naughty baby!

When I returned home, I went up to my boudoir. My maid ran to meet me.

"It has come, madame. Oh, the beauty, the magnificence!"

"What do you mean, Toinette?" I asked. Then my glance followed her eye, and on the floor by the window I beheld a great box in a cloud of wrappings and tissue paper, while above it lay a vision of vaporous white and glittering gold.

I rushed over and examined it, followed by the smiling Toinette. What I saw was a ball dress, which exceeded in beauty and richness anything that I had ever dreamed of; a robe of the finest old Point de Venise, such as one counts oneself fortunate to possess in a handkerchief, with flounces of chiffon billowing from below the edge of the skirt, and sleeves of filmy tulle. But what caught my eye was the adornment—a flight of golden butterflies embroidered upon the corsage and winding down to the hem of the skirt.

"Hold, look, then, at the embroidery!" cried Toinette. "Each butterfly wrought in gold stitches too fine for the eye to see, each head a diamond, and the wings adorned with topazes and emeralds!"

The dress was, indeed, a wonder—a marvel; lace and gold and precious stones, all brought together to form a triumphant whole.

I hung over it lost in admiration at its beauty, when suddenly Toinette's voice broke in upon my wonder.

"Fanchon will be ready to eat out her heart with envy when she sees madame in this dress, so much more beautiful than anything she has ever achieved for madame!"

"Fanchon?" I answered, in bewilderment. "To be sure, how did this come to me? Not from Fanchon, you say?"

"No, from Doucet, madame, of course; where madame ordered it, is it not so?"

"But," I cried, "I do not understand. I have never been to Doucet. I never ordered it, this dress!"

"Name of a name! A thousand pardons, madame, but this is strange!" We both stood silent a moment over the butterflies, then I stooped and looked at the wrappings.

"Where are the directions? It must be a mistake!" I exclaimed.

Toinette's face fell. "Surely not, madame!" she cried, and fumbled among the papers. Soon she found the address and held it triumphantly up to me. It was addressed:

*Madame d'Alyncourt,  
161, Quai d'Orléans.*

Then a line had been drawn through the "Quai d'Orléans," and my proper address substituted in another hand: "Hôtel d'Alyncourt, Bois de Boulogne."

"You see, madame," cried my faithful Toinette.

"But," I said, puzzled, "I have never even been in the Quai d'Orléans."

"To be sure not," replied Toinette, stolidly; "and that is why they scratched it out and wrote in 'Hôtel d'Alyncourt'!"

I shook my head. "That is all very well," I said, "but I never ordered the dress. I never even saw a golden butterfly until to-day!"

Toinette puzzled for a moment, then looked up with a peal of her hearty Norman laughter. "Madame, I have it," she cried; "it is the Christmas present of Monsieur the Comte to madame,

that madame may accompany him to the ball to-night!"

The tears came to my eyes, and I laughed out loud with joy. "Toinette, Toinette!" I cried; "oh, my dear good Toinette!" and I flung my arms around the kind creature's neck and kissed her heartily, as though she had been my sister. She was surprised, I dare say; but I was so happy, you see, I was so happy!

"Toinette," I said, "I will go to the ball to-night. Have all in readiness for me, my lingerie, my jewels——"

"*Eh bien*, madame, all is in the box that madame may require; and, as for jewels, have I madame's permission to open this green morocco case?"

I nodded. She pressed the spring, and within upon the pale green satin bed lay a necklace and a tiara; more butterflies wrought in gold and jeweled magnificently, a *parure* to make an empress sigh.

"But, oh," cried Toinette, regretfully, "the tiara is broken;" and she held it up for me to see. The jewels, the workmanship, were perfect, but the central butterfly, the keystone, as it were, was missing, and a gap yawned in the center where it should be.

"No matter, Toinette," I replied, cheerfully, "the tiara matters not in the least. And, oh, was it not a charming thought in my husband, this wonderful costume!"

I ran downstairs to find Remy, but he was gone out. Upon my return through the gallery I met the dowager, and smiled upon her.

"Christmas greetings, dear *belle-maman*," I cried. She looked her amazement. Had she lingered a moment, I should have kissed her as I did Toinette. It is absurd to be so happy, is it not?

Some one I must have to show my joy, so I ran to my dear Pippi.

"Pippi," I cried, "he loves me, ugly as I am. He wants me to go to the ball with him. He had been thinking of me and planning for me all this time. Do you hear? He loves me, Pippi!"

"Me'y Kimmas!" gurgled Pippi.

Then, because Remy loved me, I flung

Pippi down among the cushions of the sofa, and tickled his fat legs, till he shrieked; and then smothered him with kisses. He plunged and wriggled with glee, and something fell from his little pocket with a ringing thud upon the floor.

"Oh, my goldy-goldy!" cried Pippi, and stretched out his little hand.

I picked up the lost treasure from the floor. It was the small, flat, white parcel that had fallen from Diane's bag, the night before.

A chill shot through me. It was as though a cloud had passed over the face of my happiness. With trembling fingers I tore away the paper. Within I found a great golden butterfly, with a diamond head and stars of emeralds and topazes—beyond a doubt, as I at once saw, the missing ornament of the tiara.

I puzzled, vaguely. Why had the costume been sent to me, and this, its crowning glory, been in the possession of Diane? Mechanically, I picked up the white paper in which it had been wrapped. Upon its face I read the address, carelessly scrawled as if in mere memorandum:

*Mme. d'Alyncourt,  
164, Quai d'Orléans.*

"Come p'ay wiz Pippi, mamma!" and a vigorous hand assaulted me with sofa pillows.

But I sat thinking.

Madame d'Alyncourt! How did a parcel directed to Madame d'Alyncourt fall into the possession of Diane? To be sure, she was once Mademoiselle d'Alyncourt. But now she is Madame de Luz!

And the Quai d'Orléans! Both parcels directed to 164, Quai d'Orléans!—a direction of which I had never heard.

Slowly I pieced circumstance to circumstance. My husband's open indifference to me, his open devotion to his beautiful cousin; his frequent absences from home; Diane's unequaled splendor of dress, so lately achieved; those two parcels directed to me, one of which had, nevertheless, been given into the possession of Diane.



Directed to me? Yes. But what was there strange in the address? They were both directed: Madame d'Alyncourt. Not: Madame the Comtesse d'Alyncourt, as is my name.

I understood everything now. Remy had dared to give his name—but not all his name—at this secret nest in the Quai d'Orléans.

The Quai d'Orléans! I jumped to my feet. I would drive there instantly, I would confront the traitors face to face. I had no idea of what I would say to them. For a moment it occurred to me that the joke at least was on my side. For it was my money—my *dot* and my inheritance—that had brought back prosperity to the house of D'Alyncourt. It was I, therefore, who paid the rent for this apartment, I that supplied the very clothes upon Diane's back—I, the Little Caterpillar!

It seemed to me that the very mention of this fact would be for me a sufficient revenge.

I rushed back to my room, and put the butterfly in place in the tiara: The spring snapped together, and completed at once the tiara and the proof of my husband's treachery.

Then I called Toinette to dress me. My eye fell upon the gauzy, glittering splendor that lay in the sunlight by the window, and I rushed over to rend it into fragments.

"Madame, madame!" cried Toinette.

I paused for a moment, and Toinette looked at me.

"*Bon Dieu du bois*, madame! How your eyes shine—how brilliant are your cheeks! Madame will be the loveliest of all the ladies at the ball to-night!"

I laughed with a bitterness I could not control, and as I glanced at her my eye fell upon the mirror behind her. Within it I saw a blazing, blooming face, kindled and lit beyond my knowledge. Was that I, that wild creature? Was that really I?

Slowly I dropped uninjured the filmy magnificence which my hands had seized. An idea sprang and took shape in my brain. I crossed the room, and looked in the mirror; my face was thin, irregular, it is true, but suddenly it

dawned upon me that its very irregularity was full of infinite possibilities. Rapidly I reviewed them in my mind, all the promises which modern Paris holds out to turn plainness into prettiness; devices which I had hitherto scorned, but which now came to me with all the glamour of a new existence.

Was it possible that their art could make my ugliness blossom into beauty, even for one night—only for one night?

You see, I had read romances; I had read those tales of women who at the fateful moment array themselves in loveliness, and measure their strength against that of their adversary in the open field. And it seemed to me that here, swung to me on the swift pendulum of time, was the fleeting moment of my opportunity.

To go to the ball in this splendid dress, to outshine Diane, to win back my husband's love—if that were possible!

But, oh, if I failed! If I failed!

I threw up my head, I was resolved.

"Toinette," I said, "I will drive first back to Madame Fanchon."

So a half hour later I sat closeted with my *coû turière*. "Fanchon," I said, "I want a carriage cloak, all white fur and gold embroidery. I want two or three street dresses, some negligées, some hats, some house dresses—oh, everything pretty that you have on hand, Fanchon!"

"No grays and browns this time, madame?" asked Fanchon, with a smile.

"No," I cried, "the brightest colors you can give me, all lace and silver and pale violet—you know, Fanchon! And the cloak to-night, the rest of the things to-morrow. Can you do it, I wonder?"

Fanchon bowed. She is a wonderful woman. "It shall be done, madame."

"And you will come, you yourself, to dress me to-night; you will put on my dress, you will make my figure look as it should? You may pinch me to death, you may put in ruffles and puffs wherever you choose. I trust you, Fanchon!"

Fanchon grinned. "It is a favor that I have long sought of madame," she replied; "trust me, madame shall have the curves of Liane de Pougy."

"And, Fanchon—" I paused and

took breath. "Tell me—whom should you recommend—to gild my hair a little for me?"

Fanchon clapped her hands in glee, then restrained herself decorously. "Madame comes to her senses at last," she said, demurely. "Wait a moment; one of my own attendants shall conduct madame to the workroom of the first artist in Paris."

So I left Fanchon, and drove on to the hairdresser's. I was reckless, filled with a desperate glee, a burning resolution to conquer Diane at every cost!

"Madame desires red or gold?" inquired the soft voice of "the first artist in Paris."

"Golden!" I cried, thinking of Diane.

"A deep red-gold, or golden red?—a deep tint to harmonize with madame's dark eyes, is it not so?" and he smiled insinuatingly at me.

"How long will it take?"

"A week, perhaps."

"A week?" I cried, in dismay. "It must be done to-night!"

"Ah!" he reflected, slowly. "That is not impossible. I do not say it is impossible. For a deep, golden red we shall not require the bleaching, to be sure. But the tinting even alone is a toilsome, a lengthy process."

"But how long, how long?" I cried.

"Possibly six, probably seven hours. Ah, madame would die of fatigue!"

I plucked out my hatpins, and threw my hat to Toinette. "Will you begin now?" I said.

Ah, the martyrdom of those seven hours, when I sat with my head bound in evil-smelling pastes; when I passed from dark room to the light of reflectors, and back to the dark again; electric currents, strange Oriental washes; oh, the weary, weary hours!

It was six o'clock when finally I issued forth and looked in the mirror; a dull and roughened mass of red hair overhung my fallow face. "What have you done to me?" I cried, in dismay.

"A few hours more are necessary, madame. Then to-night, when madame dresses, I will myself be in attendance to apply the golden wash and the 'crimper,' and *crac!* You shall see!"

When I went home I did not go to put Pippi to bed; I was tired and nervous; and I was so afraid, you see, that in my new guise he would not know me; and that I could not bear.

But before I went to lie down I had to go and see that his Christmas presents were laid all in order, and the tree ready to light in the nursery. Merry Christmas, little Pippi!

Then a sudden idea came to me. I must have an escort, I could not go alone to the ball of Madame the Ambassador! An escort—whom could I find, in all the world of Paris? I pondered. Then it came to me, my happy thought. Ever since my marriage I had been pursued with injunctions to imitate my cousin Diane—*ch bien*, then I would be a dutiful wife and copy her, this exemplary Diane, and begin by playing the coquette with my cousin's husband!

So I went to the telephone, and called up the Marquis de Luz. He is a gay, brilliant man, one of the most celebrated *viveurs* in Paris, and in certain sets accounted irresistible. Myself, I have never greatly admired him, for it has always seemed to me that I saw something cynical in his smile, something bold, yet weary, in his eyes. But, then, he has never turned his eyes upon me!

In response to my request he gave but a languid assent. Yes, certainly, he was glad to be of service. At what hour should he come? I replied: "Eleven o'clock." And then with a sudden thought I added: "But remember, not a word of this to Diane; or, if you see my husband, not a word to him!"

*Crac!* The voice in my ear flashed into a sudden life. "Aha, my little cousin!" cried the marquis, in a voice that I had never heard before. "So this little adventure is just between you and me!"

I did not know what answer to make, so I just said: "Oh, Guy!" very softly. But it seemed to be a perfectly proper reply, for the marquis's voice replied, more tenderly than ever: "At eleven o'clock, you say? Very well, I will be in punctual attendance, my little Gabrielle."

I ran upstairs for an hour's rest, but

I could not sleep. The spirit of the adventure had begun to get into my blood. I weighed chances, I practiced coquetties, all alone there in the dark. Of all those heroines of romance who had set themselves to outdazzle the charms of a guilty rival, I could not recall one who had failed; nevertheless, I was ready to believe that the task was not so easy as it appeared. And at the bare thought of failure my heart stood still.

At nine o'clock Toinette knocked upon my door; and upon entering my boudoir, I found the first artist in Paris in attendance upon me, armed with sheafs of combs and glass bottles and shiny tongs.

"Now, madame," said he, "if madame will but be patient for an hour, madame shall see what it can achieve, my art!"

But never did an hour seem shorter to me, as I sat with his skillful fingers rubbing, varnishing, curling the mysterious locks which I could not see. Toinette stood by, with Madame Fanchon; and as the artist put the finishing touch to his work by pressing the combs in my hair behind, the two watchers gave a simultaneous cry of admiration.

"Ah, beautiful, marvelous!" they cried.

I sprang up from my chair to go over to the mirror, but monsieur put out a detaining hand. "One moment, madame. Beneath this vivid coiffure I find madame's tints too pale. If madame will permit it, a dark line to the eyebrow, a shadow to the lash, so! a touch of carmine to the lips, if madame graciously permits?"

"Anything, anything!" I cried.

"Ah, so! Madame will be a vision of loveliness. And now, though pink cheeks are hardly the style for a Parisienne, still, with this influx of American beauties, the taste of the high world is beginning to change. So upon each of madame's beautiful cheeks a touch of rose—and now, behold!"

"Ah, no!" cried Toinette. "I beseech madame, wait till the whole toilet is achieved; and then, behold the miracle complete!"

The idea pleased me; so, the first artist of Paris dismissed, I abandoned

my still unknown charms to the care of Fanchon. With what care she invested me in the garments which she had prepared, how skillfully she rubbed my dusky neck and arms with her wonderful white pomade; and, Heaven, how she squeezed my waist!

Finally, with the aid of Fanchon, she lifted the white and golden miracle, the robe which lay ready upon the bed.

"How, Doucet!" sniffed Fanchon.

"Name of a pipe, do you not understand?" whispered Toinette. "The robe is not of madame's ordering; it was a Christmas present, a surprise from Monsieur the Comte!"

Fanchon shrugged her shoulders, and applied herself to the business of investing me in my butterfly splendor. The dress was, to be sure, a little too large for me—dear Diane is a heavy woman! So Fanchon, with infinite art and a sharp-pointed needle, sewed me into the gown like a doll. Then Toinette approached with the tiara, which Fanchon clamped to my hair; the butterfly necklace was hung around my neck, my gloves were fastened, and I was pushed to the mirror with a cry: "Madame, behold!"

Ah, Gabrielle!

It was not you, my little self, that I beheld, this work of art, of paint and dye and diamonds! Hair of burnished copper, in shining multitudinous waves, dark eyes, scarlet lips, cheeks of coral and neck of ivory, and a figure willowy, curving, delicious.

I trembled; yes, I trembled! It seemed to me that in the achievement of this audacious beauty I had broken the very laws of nature. I shrank from the sight of it, this shimmering, unholy loveliness; and in an involuntary impulse I lifted my hand and made the sign of the cross.

There was a rap upon the door; Toinette went and opened it. One of my servants stood there, bowing.

"Monsieur the Marquis de Luz waits below, asking for madame," he said.

I turned from the mirror, filled with sudden strength. Now the moment had arrived at last, and my glass showed me that at least I was full armed for the

conflict to come. My heart swelled with a new knowledge, the conscious power to charm and to delight; and I trailed downstairs with head held high, while Toinette followed behind me with my cloak of white furs.

In the foyer I found the marquis, high colored and sparkling from the winter air. In his unaffected start at beholding me, his visible effort to conceal his amazement, and in the sudden, eager admiration of his gaze, I found certain earnest of my transformation.

I gave him my hand in greeting. He bent over it in homage, and Toinette approached with my wrap.

But the marquis snatched the cloak from her hands. "Allow me!" he said, and with a deferential tenderness to which for years I had been a stranger, he enveloped me in its cherishing folds.

I fluttered my eyelids in a fleeting glance. "You are good to me, Guy," I murmured, and again his eyes met mine.

I had burned my bridges behind me, I had embarked upon my voyage. And it was with a wild sense of exhilaration that I entered my carriage, followed by the marquis. And over the snowlit streets we drove together to the Christmas ball.

### III.

The ballroom of the embassy was filled with eyes and voices, with the smell of evergreens and the music of violins, as I entered leaning on the arm of the marquis. On right and left I received the compliments which I most desired, for of all my friends and acquaintances not one recognized me—even Lady Innesford herself turned to the marquis with an inquiring glance as she courtesied to me; and I beheld her for an instant startled out of her English apathy as Guy enlightened her in an undertone: "My cousin, Madame d'Alyncourt."

Guy claimed my hand for the first waltz, and I set myself seriously to the business of playing the coquette. *Mon Dieu*, but they are easy, these wiles that I have watched all my life from a curious and awe-struck distance; eyes low-

ered, raised in quick meaning, then mysteriously veiled again; a hand momentarily yielded, as suddenly withdrawn; a tantalizing laugh, varied now and then by a tender sigh—all these cheap and contemptible devices I played upon the marquis; and before the end of that dance, I saw beyond doubt that I had him—in the quaint *argot* of the Americans—"roped and thrown." Yes, Guy de Luz, the leader of fashion, the famous boudoir conqueror, whose approval is sufficient to establish any woman as a belle, leaned over me with tender ardor and begged leave to inscribe his name on my program from the beginning to the end! But even I, in this my first experiment in flirtation, knew better than to agree to that. I shook my head brusquely, then laughed, then shot a tender glance; and finally agreed to three more dances and supper.

And now I began to reap the benefits of my wisdom in flying first at the moon, for stamped as I now was with the approval of the man most celebrated of all in Paris for his taste and his successes, I found myself at once the central attraction of the room. Fifty would-be partners thronged about me, but nowhere among them did I find the face that I at once longed and feared to see. I apportioned my dances carelessly, magnificently, as though it were a business to which I was well used. The cotillion, however, I refused to give, saying that I would make up my mind later on; and I flung a challenging glance around the group that gazed and waited upon me. Heaven! how I despised them! "What, then, are men," I said to myself, "to pass by modesty and simplicity and truth, to be caught only by dye and paint and tawdry, foolish artifices?" And at that instant, in the middle of my triumph, I think I began to pray for either of two things; either that Remy should not come, after all, or that when he saw me he should frown at me dismayed, and take me instantly home in sternest displeasure.

But still he did not come. I passed from partner to partner, with an evergrowing dazzle of success. The ambassador himself requested to be pre-

sented to me, and did me the honor to tread on my toes in a waltz. He described with great animation a fox hunt in which he had taken part during his last visit to his native land; set forth the merits of his new breed of beagles, from which he expected great things; and finally ended up with a commendation of my gown. "By Jove! I like those little shiny butterflies," he observed; "they remind a chap of summer, and all that sort of thing; they're ripping, you know."

I smiled, and made the soft eyes. "Only my butterflies, monseigneur?" I murmured, and bent ever so slightly toward him. He flushed faintly under his sunburn—he, the stoical Briton!—and returned my smile with eyes of frank admiration. "If I may be allowed to say so, comtesse, I was just thinking you are like a butterfly yourself. You are so slender and so glittering, you know, and when you dance you seem to float along in the air." He laughed. "I'm getting quite poetical, but just the same, by Jove! I think you're ripping, don't you know!"

I smiled gently in reply, and began to admire the decorations of the ballroom. In this, at least, I was able to be sincere, for it was a charming sight, this Christmass ballroom, all trimmed with evergreen and wreathed, after the English fashion, with holly. Upon a great open fireplace blazed and crackled a huge English fire of immense logs. All around against the dark oak panels of the room were set candles in silver sconces, which twinkled and lit up the merry scene, the gauzy splendor of the ladies, the bright uniforms of the officers present, and the tinted head of Gabrielle.

"A real old English Christmas," said the ambassador, rubbing his hands; "and later on, comtesse, you shall see all the rest—even the mistletoe!" And he smiled upon me; but the music of the violins broke in upon him, and my partner came in eager haste to claim my hand.

So by supper time, you may imagine, I was sufficiently weary to be glad of an opportunity to rest. Guy sought me,

and took me off with an air of proprietorship that made me smile. And still I had seen nothing of my husband and Diane.

As we swept downstairs to supper, I noticed how much larger the crowd seemed than in the ballroom above.

"Ah, little innocence!" laughed the marquis, "do you not know, now is the hour the lovers come in from the *flirt* corners, the shadowy niches behind the trees and palms." He paused and looked at me with smiling keenness. "Perhaps," he remarked, carelessly, "we shall see him now, your husband."

I met his glance. "And your wife?" I replied, and he shrugged his shoulders in silence.

We seated ourselves at a holly-trimmed table; and sure enough, no sooner had we taken our places than my eyes beheld him—him, my husband—him for whose sake all this laborious miracle had been wrought. Diane was with him; they moved slowly, seeking evidently for a place, and coming straight toward us.

How handsome he looked, my Remy! How tall, how distinguished in his dark green uniform of the cuirassiers and his orders on his breast! I shut my eyes and prayed for strength. Then I opened them, and, drawn by an irresistible attraction, looked back at my husband again; and at that instant his eyes met mine.

His gaze roved over me carelessly, it seemed to me with some admiration, as of a stranger; and I smiled at him. He started, bowed, looked again; then he turned scarlet and his jaw dropped, and he stood staring, staring like a bewildered schoolboy. I nodded in careless greeting, and bent my head again to the marquis, who leaned toward me ardently across the tiny table, whispering and playing with the white plumes of my fan.

In a moment I heard—just as I knew I should—the voice of my husband in my ear, in startled, urgent tones: "Gabrielle, is this really you, Gabrielle?"

I looked up at him and smiled. There he stood, his eyes starting from his head

as he gazed at me. And beside him, there beside him forgotten, stood Diane, the detested, beautiful Diane, in the gown of last night and a green twisted smile; and in sudden clearness of vision, I asked myself how I ever could have found her sufficiently handsome to be a cause of fear.

Her eyes traveled over my costume, her gown, ordered by my husband, designed for her; she surveyed my jewels, my hair, my complexion, and then she tried to laugh. Then our eyes met, and in that glance all decorous pretense was torn away; we understood each other, we defied each other, Diane and I!

"Gabrielle, how lovely you look! I would never have known you!" cried Remy, gazing at me.

"Myself," observed the marquis, "I prefer to say, I never knew my little cousin till this moment!"

"Then, it appears," cooed Diane, sweetly, "that I alone knew her, our Little Caterpillar!"

I lifted my eyes to hers, smiling. "And even you, my dear cousin," I replied, "failed to realize one fact in natural history, that the caterpillar must always, sooner or later, break out of her cocoon!"

The marquis smiled and touched my foot lightly, beneath the table. Diane bit her lip. "On the contrary," she answered, with a shrug.

Suddenly I heard a new voice in my ear, that of a colonel of the *chasseurs*, one of my new-sprung circle of admirers. "For one moment," he said, "I intrude; to inquire whether she has decided whom she will honor in the cotillion, Madame Butterfly?"

Diane glanced at him, then surveyed my costume furiously. It was, I saw, on the tip of her tongue to spit out some sarcasm concerning it, but she was interrupted by the voices of Remy and of the marquis, both clamoring for my hand in the cotillion.

"You will dance the cotillion with me, Gabrielle, of course!"

"I think that you have promised me, my little cousin!"

I had succeeded! My head turned a little giddy as I surveyed them; Diane

neglected and conquered, the three men suppliant before my empty coquetry and artificial charms. I shrugged my shoulders half out of my gown, and trailed a sidelong look over the group before me. "I will dance," I said, "with Monsieur the Colonel."

He bowed his thanks and withdrew. Remy gazed at me in bewilderment.

"What does this mean, Gabrielle?" he cried.

Diane took his arm. "It means, my dear Remy," she observed, "that, as Monsieur the Colonel remarked just now, Madame Caterpillar has become Madame Butterfly!"

Her husband glanced at her. "Go and find a place, before all the tables are filled," he observed, brusquely. Still Remy lingered, gazing at me; till Diane, with a frown, pulled him away, and they lost themselves in the crowd.

Then supper was served in the true English style; a great boar's head was brought in on a platter, carved and dispensed among the guests. *Rosbif* in abundance, tankards of ale, *blombuddin*, crowned with holly and blazing with brandy; I ate them all! There were, to be sure, truffles and champagne for those who preferred them, but Guy and I agreed that on such an occasion as this the love of the picturesque must far exceed the mere pleasures of the palate. And really, *blombuddin* is not so very bad. So we ate our supper, and drank to ourselves and to perfidious Albion. And all the time, growing more and more bold, more and more ardent, the marquis paid me his court.

I do not deny that he did it well—he, the celebrated eater of hearts! But neither do I deny that his protestations of admiration and of love soon began to be extremely wearisome. If paint and fine feathers pleased him, then that was no better than I had expected of him; it was a matter of indifference to me what he thought of me, and I smiled at his flatteries and his advances—all the more because, burning into the back of my tinselled head, I felt Remy's eyes staring, gazing, imploring.

When supper was ended we all went upstairs to the hall again, where in front



of the great fire Lord Innesford mixed a great bowl of what they call wassail, these English; a bitter mixture of wines, boiling hot, and with crab apples and raisins bobbing around in it like a Norman peasant's stew. If my mind had not been already whirling with delight, terror and excitement—if I had not felt Remy's eyes from the other side of the room always seeking mine, I could have smiled to see the people all sitting around and sipping the abominable mixture, and saying: "Hold, but it is delicious!" and "*Mon Dieu*, but you have a wonderful taste in drinks, you other English!"

Then some native singers, in native costumes of some wonderful sort, came in and sang Christmas carols until the polite smiles froze upon people's lips; and then finally we were free for the cotillion.

"Now I lose you!" said Guy, with a shrug. "And it seems to me that they have given us everything of the English Christmas except its one amusing feature, my faith!"

"It has, then, an amusing feature, this Christmas?" I inquired, with a yawn.

He bent toward me. "The mistletoe," he replied, in his thrilling, soft undertone, which he accomplished so beautifully; and just then my little colonel came to claim my hand for the cotillion. Guy glared at him, the colonel flung him a glance of triumph; and in seeing myself, me, ugly little Gabrielle! thus the object of contention between two men, I burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter that sent the marquis off in a huff.

The cotillion was magnificent. Never have I seen such picturesque figures, such lavish favors; and never before, certainly, have I had partners to make the evening a success. But now as I sat chattering, ogling, flirting, as I danced with clinging rapidity, and flashed my darkened lashes and my painted lips in a meaning smile, it seemed to me that I was the central attraction of the room. My old friends gazed at me in wondering amazement, everywhere I met whisperings and puzzled glances of admiration; and over against me in the op-

posite side of the room I saw two faces glowering, glaring after me as I danced by.

Again and again Remy came to favor me, or I met him in the changing whirl of the cotillion. "Gabrielle, how lovely you are looking!" he would say. "I assure you, I am proud of my little wife to-night!"

Proud of me, painted like the singer of a *café-chantant*! Oh, my husband!

Then again: "Gabrielle, what does it all mean? You said you had no intention of coming to-night. Why didn't you let me bring you? Why don't you tell me what it all means?"

I raised my eyes and looked into his. Did he read my meaning, my understanding of him and Diane? I do not know. But the more I offered indifference to his pleadings, the more his ardor grew. Diane sat unheeded against the wall, while at every opportunity her partner hurried across the hall to me. Once again his devotion was all for Gabrielle!

But, nevertheless, I relaxed not a hair's breadth in the great business of coquetting with my little colonel and with the partners that pressed about me. And when the crowning event of the evening, the mistletoe figure, finally arrived, I sprang up as brisk as a lark to perform my share of the new sport.

We danced together, the colonel and I. Then the little whistle blew and we rushed to the table where we were given tiny parasols of a wonderful and fantastic design. For a moment I examined mine to discover what it could be; then I beheld a wreathing bower of oak leaves, all made of the thinnest and finest green silk, and the top surmounted with a frail vine bearing clusters of white berries. "Behold," laughed the ambadress, "your mistletoe!"

For a moment I paused; it was perfectly evident, the intention of these favors; the question was, with whom should I stand under the mistletoe? There was one person for whose kiss I longed; but to bestow my favor upon him would be the admission of defeat. And as these thoughts went through my mind, quick as a flash, I tripped to the

side of the room where Remy sat against the wall, gazing at me with expectant eagerness; and by him sat Diane, her lip twitching in a nervous smile. Even in that short space of time I noticed with pleasure that her hair was badly arranged and her nose looked red.

Nearby them sat the marquis, also with gaze riveted upon me. I paused and glanced from one to the other, thrilling in the enjoyment of my instant of choice, my moment of power.

Then I walked past Remy over to the marquis, and gave him my hand. His arm encircled me and we waltzed off together, under the gauzy green parasol.

Directly in front of Remy and Diane, the marquis stooped down and kissed me, full upon my reddened lips.

From the tail of my eye I saw my husband rise, clinch his hands, sink back into his seat again. And I felt his eyes follow us as we danced on, the marquis and I, beneath the tiny swaying canopy of oak leaves and mistletoe.

Ah, Remy!

Two hours later, in the frosty silence that comes before the dawn, the marquis handed me from my carriage beneath the *porte-cochère* of the Hôtel d'Alyncourt. As the front door opened he followed me into the foyer and stood for an instant with my hand in his.

"Good-night, little cousin," said he.

"Good-night, Guy," I replied, softly.

He grasped my hand more firmly.

"Tell me," he said, "when I shall see you again?"

I laughed and tried to withdraw my hand. "Now, as formerly," I replied, "you may see me every day—in the family!"

"That is not what I mean," he replied, reproachfully, "and you know it very well. Tell me, when shall we see each other again, just you and I?"

For a moment I hesitated. Was this, then, the logical conclusion to the rôle I had adopted—this, a secret flirtation with the marquis? But, after all, why not? What did it matter? All my life I had tried to be good—to be faithful, tender and true. And what was the

result? Neglect, humiliation! And now, to-night, for the first time I had resorted to the tawdry wiles of the coquette and had won for my reward the brilliant, the crowning success of my life—the only success! So why not keep on in the same way, in the path that led to worldly glory, love, triumph over my enemies, everything that heart could desire?

I raised my painted lids in a slow, languorous smile. "To-morrow," I whispered, softly. "I make my confession at the Madeleine. And I leave the church——"

The marquis bent his head to catch my half-breathed words. "Where and when?" he said.

"At half-past three by the little north-east door behind the shrine of St. Geneviève," I murmured.

"Many thanks," he replied, and bent to kiss my hand. "And now, *au revoir*, little Butterfly!"

The door closed behind him and he was gone. I ran upstairs desperately and through the dimly lit corridors to my place of refuge—the nursery where Pippi lay sleeping.

In my butterfly raiment I flung myself down beside his little bed, and pressed my painted cheek to the warm, wrinkled softness of the little, upturned palm. His breathing came to my ear, tender and measured, and in the faint light of the shaded candle I could see the shining of his yellow curls.

How long I knelt there I know not. In all the world it seemed to me I had nothing to cling to but this little hand.

Suddenly the door creaked, and a step sounded softly upon the threshold. Looking up, I saw my husband. He had come to me, as I knew he would.

Our glances met, and I laid my finger upon my lip. His eyes summoned and drew me, but with a reckless gathering of all my recollection I shook my head and smiled. He looked at me perplexed, stood a moment in silence, then withdrew; but his footsteps went away no further than the hall. There in the darkness I knew he waited for me.

And because he waited for me outside the door, I fled with noiseless steps

through Pippi's schoolroom into my boudoir. There Toinette waited for me, and twice while she was undressing me my husband came and knocked, then rattled imperatively upon my door. Both times I laughed at him and bade him good-night.

Why, I hardly knew; but the thought of seeing him was intolerable to me. He had come back to me, and I found that I did not want him. I had won it, the golden fruit for which I had strained so high; and, behold! I found it nothing but ashes in my hand.

So, in half-comprehended sorrow, I sobbed upon my pillow; and before I fell asleep the Christmas dawn broke coldly, and the far-off bells were ringing.

#### IV.

A little hand patted my cheek, and a little voice called, gayly: "Me'y Kim-mas, mamma!" I opened my eyes, and Pippi, in his pink flannel night clothes and bare feet, stood beside my bed. How absurd he looked, the treasure!

"Pippi up, mamma!" he clamored, scrambling up the slippery sides of the counterpane. He tucked his fat legs under the blankets, allowed me to kiss him, then called, imperiously: "Nanon, Nanon, b'ing Pippi t'ings!"

And my kind old Nanon entered, laden with a hundred bulky playthings. Pippi snatched them from her and flung them broadcast upon the bed, with rather uncomfortable results for me. "'Ook, mamma," he cried, breathlessly. "'Ook, mamma, Pippi pitty t'ings!"

Nanon smiled at me. "Madame slept late, after her fatigues of last night," she observed.

"Late? What time is it, then?"

"Madame, it is past one o'clock."

"*Mon Dieu*, it is, indeed, late. And Pippi not dressed yet?"

"Madame, he would not allow us to dress him until he had been in your bed, like all the other mornings."

"Pippi mamma bed," observed Pippi, proudly, hearing himself the subject of conversation; then planted his fat feet

upon my neck, in strenuous endeavor to make his woolly lamb squeak for me. "Quee, quee, mamma!" he cried.

How far away seemed last night, its worthless rivalries and worldly passions. Slowly everything came back to me, the new life that I had awakened to, the new path that I had mapped out for myself, and, above all—the Madeleine, half-past three!

So, after my coffee and roll, I sent Pippi out to walk with his Nanon. I felt myself so weak when he was by me, you understand! And it would never do to let my resolution fail. So I called Toinette, and ordered her to restore to me the new face of the night before, a face that I more than half believed to be a dream. But the pencil and rouge and curling tongs repeated their old magic, and when Toinette had laced me into one of my new gowns, a miracle of chinchilla and pale violet velvet, I saw in the mirror before me a repetition of last night's beauty; a trifle metallic, perhaps, but undeniably striking and brilliant. Upon the glittering, coppery waves of my hair she placed my hat, a wide "shepherdess" with drooping violet plumes, then hung a huge chinchilla muff around my neck with a long chain of silver and amethyst.

The whole effect did undeniable credit to Fanchon, and Toinette grinned as I surveyed myself in the glass. (It seems to me that it is thus I pass my time now, at the glass.)

"Madame is not disgusted with her appearance, that sees itself!" cried Toinette, gayly. "No, and neither is monsieur!"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Nothing; but he has been waiting all the morning for madame to wake, poor Monsieur the Comte! 'Let me know the instant she can receive me,' he would say. So I sent word to him just now by Gaston. Hold, madame! I hear his step."

"Nonsense!" I replied, trembling. But, sure enough, in a moment it came, the familiar step, the once desired knock. Toinette skipped to the door, and Remy entered, confident, smiling. "Gabrielle," he cried, "how long you

have made me wait, my beautiful Gabrielle!"

I stepped back and looked at him. How handsome he looked, how ruddy, how eager! My heart yearned with sorrow over him, over the love that I had borne him, the faith that I had given him yesterday.

"So you wanted to see me," I observed; "many thanks for the compliment!"

He looked at me in some surprise. "Come, my dear, the game has lasted long enough. Sit down by me here now, my Gaby, and tell me what you have done to yourself, and what it all means."

His easy carelessness made me angry; all my indignation, all my outraged faith, rose within me, and I planted my return shot direct. "It means," said I, "that I have had news from 164, Quai d'Orléans."

He turned white, and swallowed once or twice before he found his voice. "Nonsense, child!" he said.

"Yes, it's all nonsense, isn't it, Remy? For, you see, yesterday when this dress came which I knew was meant for Diane, it seemed to me that it would be such a very clever thing to dress up in it, and paint myself into beauty, and go and outshine her at the ball—the woman who had stolen you from me! I thought that it would be a very splendid thing to win back your love. I did not realize then, you see, that love won in such a way as that isn't worth having."

When Remy spoke again all the flippancy was gone from his tone, and his eyes met mine with a sudden appeal, almost tragic. "Gabrielle," he said, "my wife, won't you let me come back to you again?"

I laughed. "My dear friend," I replied, "I really think I could have respected you more if you hadn't been quite so quick to turn from Diane's face to this new face of mine."

He rose, and walked up and down the room. "For my cousin Diane," he said, "I make no admissions, I ask no charity. She is outside the discussion. She is blameless, I swear to you. You do not deny it, Gabrielle?"

"I do not deny," I replied, "that you are a gentleman!"

He bowed quietly. "Thank you, Gabrielle. And now—for myself! I am a worthless sinner, dear, and blind as a mole into the bargain. But now my eyes are opened. I come to you with all my love. On my knees I implore your forgiveness. I love you, Gabrielle! Can you ever forgive me?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "Why, yes," I replied, "so far as that goes, I forgive you."

His eyes shone, and he sprang forward. "Then, Gabrielle!" he cried.

"Then, Remy, nothing! My forgiveness, you want it. But my love and faith and respect, that's a different matter!"

He looked at me like a man dazed. "What do you mean?" he said.

"I mean this, Remy. I have given you my best and my all; I will be loved for nothing less. And you offer me a love for a beauty that is not even skin-deep."

"Gabrielle, I assure you that you wrong me. It makes me very happy to see you restored to your youth and looking your loveliest. But it is not that that makes me realize how dear you are to me."

"But if it's not these fine feathers that have brought you back to me, Remy, what is it, then? Ah, my husband, do you think I do not understand? When you came into the nursery, night before last, and found me sitting by the fire with your child in my arms, you found nothing in me to interest you—you passed me by. But last night when you saw me in the drawing room, tinted like a *cocotte*, playing the fool and the flirt, followed by a crowd of the most worthless men in Paris, then you ran up to me with outstretched arms. I am no light o' love, Remy; I am your wife. Such a love as you offer me is worthless to me, and I despise it. Yes, I scorn myself for winning it, and I scorn you when you offer it to me!"

Remy looked at me with some dignity. "But, after all," he observed, "a man can give no more than his love."

"The love that you gave to Diane yes—

terday, to Gabrielle to-day, and to-morrow—to whom?"

"To you, my wife; always and forever to you!"

"Until you see another face, fresher than mine or more prettily painted. Ah, no, my husband. The old days are over, the butterfly has broken from her chrysalis. She can never be the quiet, ignorant little worm again. I have eaten of the tree of knowledge since last night, I think, and now for the first time I see it as it is, this world! And in the future——"

He leaned toward me with a sudden hope in his face. "The future?" he said.

"In the days to come, Remy, never again shall you have to blush for your lowborn Little Caterpillar; you shall have a wife after your own heart, the most dashing hostess, the most reckless coquette, in Paris. No fashion so wild but I shall be its leader, no folly so extreme. In your home you shall find out all the high world of Paris; all its noise and gayety and glitter. But the quiet hearth by the nursery fire, the loving mother, the tender wife—never again, my dear, never, never, never!"

I left him standing there in my boudoir, and ran down the stairs to my carriage. Before me lay the strange path that I had mapped out for myself—frivolity, gayety, heartlessness. And to begin with, my rendezvous with the marquis. But, oh, *mon Dieu*, how it bored me, how it disgusted me, the bare idea of this rendezvous.

The brougham was waiting for me, the door held open. "To the Madeleine," I said, and gathered my skirts to step in, when suddenly I heard a little cry behind me. "Mamma!" called Pippi.

This annoyed me, for Pippi was always clamorous to be taken on my afternoon drive; and to-day, you see, I did not care to take him.

He came panting up the stone steps of the terrace, stretching his short legs in a wild endeavor at haste and waving his red-mittened hands frantically. "Wait, mamma, wait for Pippi!"

Behind him labored Nanon, with an

apologetic smile. I waited impatiently, prepared to ward off the usual coaxing embraces, the usual shout of appeals. "Take Pippi, mamma!" But instead of that there was a sudden pause, a quick silence, and Pippi, gazing up at me from two round horror-struck eyes, ran back and hid his rosy, quivering face in the kindly brown skirts of Nanon.

"What is the matter now?" I cried, sharply.

Nanon stooped to comfort the baby in distress who clung sobbing to her knee. "I think, madame," she replied, "that Monsieur the Vicomte does not know madame his mother, in that beautiful new—costume!" and she coughed, discreetly.

A sharp pain shot through me; and Pippi's company, from being a burden to be avoided, became the sudden object of my desire. "Pippi!" I cried, "you can come driving with mamma!"

No raptures, no response; only more sobs, a more desperate clinging to Nanon. "Go with your mamma, Monsieur Pippi, *chéri*," coaxed the old woman, gently.

The hidden head wagged from side to side in emphatic negative. "No, no! Pippi 'faid—Pippi 'faid!" wailed the little voice, disconsolately.

"Come, dearest, come with mamma; please come, my treasure!" I urged, helplessly, standing with my muff in my hand by the side of the waiting carriage door. Nanon stooped and took the weeping child in her arms. "We will delay madame no longer," said she; and I stepped into the carriage.

I drove to the Madeleine, I made my confession, as I had planned. But I did not leave the church by the little northeast door! The very sight of it, with its dark gables and its stone-carved saints, and the tall figure which I seemed to see waiting in its shadow, were enough to fill my heart with terror, and from the moment of my absolution it seemed to me that I began to see things clearly for the first time.

I drove home over the white, glittering roads of the Bois, meeting all Paris streaming along in carnival procession; and as I drew near my own door, whom

should I meet but Diane, rosy and bright-eyed in her furs. "Merry Christmas!" she cried, with unshamed gayety as she flashed by me. I waved my hand in reply; and by the tranquil charity with which I regarded her, I knew that I had at last won victory not only over her, but over myself. From the rivalries, the frivolities toward which I had tried to turn my feet, I had come back in safety. It was dark as my horses drew up before the door of the Hôtel d'Alincourt; I looked up and beheld, in a far gable, the light shining brightly from the nursery window.

Oh! but it was joy to fling them off, my borrowed plumes; to wash the paint and powder from my face and pull the rats and switches from my hair! The hateful red tint I could not change; but parted plainly and knotted low, the flaming locks became at least less conspicuous. Then I called for my plain gray dress with its wide white collar. Toinette raved and protested; I really think she wept. But what to me was the loss of the useless butterfly beauty of a moment, when at last I beheld in the glass once more the pale face and quiet eyes of the little mother, Gabrielle!

And ah, Pippi's cry of joy as he beheld me enter his nursery; his little arms around my neck, his warm cheek pressed close to mine! From noise and flare and bewildering glitter, from beckoning sin, I had come back to the certain place of peace. Beside that joy, what were the bitter triumphs of the world I had tried and found wanting? Where even was the value of that love that I had trusted and which had broken in my hand? All bitterness and rancor had gone from my heart. It was Christmas, God was good to me; and on this day, sacred to the memory of the Virgin Mother, it was not for a lonely mother to find her child's love an insufficient joy to fill the world.

The lights burned low, Pippi dozed upon my bosom. There came a soft knock upon the door. "Come in, Toinette!" I called.

But it was not Toinette who entered; some one taller, straighter than Toinette, with a graver smile and ten-

derer eyes. "Papa, papa!" cried Pippi, bouncing upon my lap. Remy came forward, and bent over to take the child in his arms. "Now," I said to myself, "when he sees me again, the ugly Little Caterpillar, we shall hear no more fine talk about his love!"

But though his eyes reflected a start of surprise as they rested upon my changed face, still there was no disgust, no aversion; no, to my surprise he surveyed me with a smile.

"Ugly little Gabrielle again, you see!" I said, with a carelessness I did not feel.

"My beautiful Gabrielle!" he replied.

And that was all. Try hard as I might to suppress it, a sudden wave of joyful amazement swept over me. Plain little Gabrielle, shorn of her false charms, he still found her lovely, still desirable! I sat silent, half in joy, half in pain; and Pippi's little voice rose up in protest against this lack of attention to him.

"Papa, papa!" he cried, "Pippi want say pwayers to papa!" He is so proud of his prayers, the treasure!

So he knelt unsteadily upon his father's knees, two rosy bare feet turned up, and his hands plastered together finger for finger. "P'ease, Dod," he prayed, "p'ease 'ove Pippi. P'ease 'ove papa; p'ease 'ove mamma; p'ease make ev'vybody 'ove Pippi!" He paused, hesitated, then, as was so often his habit, struck out triumphantly into a prayer of his own. "P'ease make papa 'ove Pippi. P'ease make papa 'ove mamma. P'ease make mamma 'ove papa. P'ease, Dod. Amen!"

Slowly Remy's head inclined toward me, I felt his hand touch mine; and as my fingers slid into the protecting warmth of his clasp, Pippi flung his arms wide and brought our heads together with a knock. My cheek lay upon my husband's, my lips were pressed against Pippi's; and as he squeezed us closer in the fragrant warmth of his embrace, he cried, in a triumphant gurgle of joy:

"Me'y Kimmas!"

Merry Christmas, indeed—dear little Pippi!



# THE PROBLEM BROWNING SET

By Cosmo Hamilton



THE House had been usefully occupying itself—so far usefully as the Irish members condescendingly allowed—with the Streets Improvement question, and it was therefore not unnatural that when Offord returned to his chambers at something after midnight, he should gaze at his well-filled bookshelves with a queer, almost pathetic longing for something which would wash away from his brain the echo of parliamentary commonplace English, to which he had been, as usual, doomed to listen, before going to bed.

It was perhaps less unnatural that, with such a purpose in view, he should turn to Robert Browning rather than to Addison, Swift or Macaulay. For to Browning, rather than to any of these, belongs the power of showing the heart of things as they are, the while leaving you not pessimistic and bitter, but more hopeful, less ready to judge, because of the rock-like belief which permeates his never-to-be-equalled poems.

His pipe, the late paper and the letter directed in the sprawling schoolboy handwriting of his best friend, young Frank Ryehope, were obliged to wait, while, with a deep sense of intellectual gratitude, Offord passed slowly from "Saul" to "Andrea del Sarto," from "Andrea del Sarto" to "A Light Woman."

It struck two o'clock as he replaced the book, his purpose achieved, loaded his pipe with the almost old-maidish care of the compleat smoker, and took up the letter from Ryehope.

"Which do you pity the most of us three?" he repeated in an argumentative way to himself: "my friend, or the mis-

tress of my friend with her wanton eyes, or me?—my friend, or the mistress of my friend, or me? Heaven only knows. You couldn't make up your mind, Robert Browning, writer of plays, or, having got the subject to your hand, you never would have let the story stay where it was."

The letter was written, or scrawled, in pencil.

"Hullo-ullo-ullo," it began. "Oh, what a merry world, most Earnest Man! (By the way, how are you? Flu gone? Hope so.) I'm off my head. Can't think of anything—except one thing—for more than a second. But I've got a terrible lot to tell you, as I tell you most things. I feel like a bit of cloud, all white and fluffy, and floating. I'm sure I'm off my head. Such news, old 'un! Lord, *how* am I to begin, when I'm perfectly certain the whole thing started before the world was fully fledged? I've put my feet in a rabbit hole to prevent them from getting above my head, and great lumps of stone in my pockets to keep me on solid earth. So perhaps I can get on now. But it's no good disguising the fact—I'm certain I'm off my head. I've chucked Paris. It was all right before The Thing happened. Then it became too small and cramped. Too full of fellow men, so to speak. Nothing to breathe, no trees, no sky, no birds to tell it to. Ye gods, what an It it is! Thought of making a dash at Nice or Cannes or Monte Carlo. But remembered the smugness of all those places, full as they are always of the gilded tradesman, the glorified charity-school boy, the naughty lady, the jaded politicsmonger and the 'aughty haristocrat. Wanted a place

wrapped in by sky on four sides—a place full of simpleness and elementary colors, cobbled and aged, near running water; a place under-peopled with sabot-footed optimists, dominated by a crinkled, Gothic church, with the furrows of countless years upon her forehead, with a smile of infinite pity and promise in her sunken eyes, with birds' nests in all her crow's-feet, and with food and warm things, content and resignation and hope, lying ready for all little sheep that have gone astray, in the palms of her outstretched hands. And why? I can hear you ask, passing your polite, cautious finger along your unmistakable chin. Because I had fallen in love, O most Earnest Man! Fallen in love? Wrong! Tumbled, dived headlong, full-length, hopelessly in love with a woman. Wrong again! With an angel! An angel who condescends to be a woman, not a woman who endeavors to be an angel. (There is a lot of difference.) I met her in Paris. I hadn't lived before. Our eyes met, and I was born. My brain was filled with one idea. Its cells were crowded with it. I must marry her. I told her so. At least, I suppose I did. I found her laughing gently one afternoon. And I kept her hand. I've kept it ever since. But we are not married yet. She said it might be calf-love. I must see more of her, she said. Marriage was either heaven, or it wasn't. But I couldn't see her in Paris. In Paris it was as difficult to see her as it is to see a cathedral that is built in with houses. That's why we are here—at Caudebec, on the Seine. I have been able to see her here. I have been standing in front of her for three days. She stands out against the sky more exquisite than any cathedral, her eyes the most beautiful rose windows ever constructed. The silver tongue of the aged church's patient bell casts out the lost hours—lost, because we are not married. But we may be in a week, in three days, in a day, in any minute. They said up at Trinity that I could hold a brief very well as president of the union. Gad! *how* I am pleading now. Good-by, dear old Worker. By the way, *her* name is Enid. She has

been married before. It was a 'wasn't' marriage. A man absurdly, idiotically called Millom-Praze gave her his name. If he hadn't died I should have choked him."

The half-tender, half-scornful laugh died on Offord's lips. He dropped the letter as though it stung him. Mrs. Millom-Praze! A woman whose eyes were more wanton, whose name was more notorious, whose record was blacker, whose morals were lighter even than those of the woman of whom Browning wrote. A woman whose name, before she dazed poor Millom-Praze, had been connected with some of the most hideous scandals of the day; a woman who fleeced young men, and herded with disreputable old ones. A woman who had long since lost the right to be classed with the mothers and sisters of any grade of man.

Mrs. Millom-Praze and Frank Rye-hope! Rye-hope the enthusiastic, the unsuspicious, the pig-headed, the youthfully blind. Rye-hope with his maiden face, and that woman! "A shame indeed," he cried, again unconsciously fitting the lines of the poem which floated in his brain to the subject before him, "if she adds just him to her nine-and-ninety other spoils, the hundredth for a whim—"

For many minutes he walked angrily, disgustedly, about the room, cursing the blindness of the man, the cunning of the woman. The boy was tangled in her toils, as many a man had been before—as poor Millom-Praze had been when she crossed his path with her hunting noose, and over him drew her net. Suicide would be better than such a marriage. The thing was, how to stop both marriage and suicide. Boys like Rye-hope had a knack of going from one extreme to the other.

His eye fell on the volume of Browning. The book was open at the poem whose lines were running alongside the thoughts in his mind:

And before my friend be wholly hers,  
How easy to prove to him, I said,  
An eagle's the game her pride prefers,  
Though she snaps at a wren instead!

As Offord read and re-read the lines, his face cleared, his lips tightened, his eyes glistened. "Very well, then," he said, shutting the book with a bang. "We will see how easy. We will see what she will do for my noble sake! We will work out the problem which Browning set, and left unfinished. We will see which is to be pitied the most of us three—my friend, or the mistress of my friend with her wanton eyes, or me!"

The silver tongue of the aged church's patient bell reminded the good people of Caudebec on the Seine that seven of the busy hours of their market day were already behind them. Frank Ryehope, bright of eye, springy of step, had been pacing up and down under the windows of his little hotel for two of them.

There is very little chance of sleep, if your bed is in a room overlooking the quay, after four o'clock in the morning on a Caudebec market day. It is then that you hear the first cheerful, high-pitched, feminine voice chaffing the sleepy gendarme, as the neatly dressed owner of it, in an apron white enough to put the nose of snow out of joint, a cap with long, busy streamers, short skirt, and side-spring boots tipped with patent leather, erects her tent stall, in which she is presently to arrange her baskets of live, conversational and extremely put-out hens and ducks, to set out her pounds of fresh, sparkling butter and new-laid eggs, great oblong plums with the early dew upon their purple cheeks, fat bunches of almost transparent grapes, and pears which look as though they would bruise at an angry word. At half-past four her voice, still cheerful, though pitched higher than before, is indistinguishable in the pleasant babble which rises on every side—the voices of peasants of both sexes and of every age—young and sweet, middle-aged and gruff, old and piping—voices of shiny-faced girls in frocks of every hue, of ruddy-faced boys in slate-colored blouses and new sabots, of bearded, tan-faced men wearing their queer, flat-topped peak caps at an angle of forty-five, of thin, brown, worn-

faced, elderly women with hair combed carefully away from their foreheads with the assistance of a wet brush, and of sunken-faced old men whose cheeks are more crinkled, lined and dried up than those of the crab apples which grow in the patches of ground they have so arduously cultivated.

By eight o'clock stalls had risen in two long lines on the cobbled quay, commencing opposite Ryehope's little hotel, and ending opposite the two-storied, many-windowed building labeled Custom House, of which the town is so inordinately proud; and if the wares displayed in them are not of a very varied nature, they are at least most useful and most reasonable. Rubbing shoulders with hens and ducks, butter, cheese, pears, apples, grapes, lettuces and radishes, you may find a choice array of white-wood sabots, lined and unlined, a collection of hand-made *bonnes'* caps and aprons, multi-colored calico petticoats, woolen chest protectors and cardigan jackets, peak caps, coarse handkerchiefs of much brilliancy and ingeniously ugly design—perhaps illustrating a Biblical subject, perhaps one of an extremely unbiblical nature—well-arranged sets of new spades, rakes, forks, trowels, hammers, of rusty nails, old hinges and battered ironwork, old books and magazines, and second-hand clothes. Here and there you will certainly find a neat stall, presided over by an old lady who sits, with folded hands, upon a camp stool, upon which are displayed simple home-made crucifixes and many packets of little cards, upon which are not inartistically painted scenes from the Way of the Cross.

The whole is a jumble of clashing color and sounds; as to colors, vermilion and slate-blue, white and yellow; as to sounds, many voices raised above many others, the crowing of cocks, the cackling of hens, the quacking of ducks, the barking of dogs, and, from a little distance, the grinding squeak of the cranks on the quay as they load small sailing vessels with timber.

To the north of the double line of tents the Seine, winding its silver way from Havre to Paris between poplar-

fringed banks; to the south, the red-roofed houses of the town creeping up the hill and round the aged church—houses of every size, of almost every color, dominated by the thin, erect spire whose weathercock seems to have poked its way into the clouds. To the east and west long, irregular roads, white with dust, leading to outlying hamlets and villages, along which many people are hurrying toward the market to buy and to sell.

Enid Millom-Fraze had said, with a laugh in all her dimples, that she would be down by nine o'clock. She loved to see the dear, simple people of the villages gathered together, she had said; and next to a harbor full of shipping, a market was to her quite the most interesting thing in the world. But between seven o'clock and eleven Ryehope had listened outside her door a dozen times. A dozen times his eager knuckle had hovered an inch from the panel, only to return to his pocket. They had wandered many miles the day before. She must be tired. It would be a shame to disturb her, he thought.

Between these visits Ryehope had watched the bustle of the market-place with an eye that saw everything through the rosy spectacles of the man in love, wandered among the stalls buying many useful things of which he had no need, and dropping gay remarks to the sellers in execrable French.

Half-past eleven found him sitting upon a pile of timber on the quay, less energetic, but not a whit less ecstatic. His Panama hat was tilted to allow the full strength of the sun to beat down on his face. His legs were stretched out in front of him, and his hands were clasped behind his head. Between his lips he held a half-smoked cigarette, which had long since gone out.

"What man is ass enough to say this isn't a ripping world?" he asked himself, with a smile. "Gad, I could live forever. Enid Ryehope! It's music! No more beastly Millom-Fraze. I have an object in life at last. I will spend every waking hour in the endeavor to rub off her memory all recollections of that unholty cad. Ill-treated her, did

he? Neglected her, did he? Spread horrid stories about in the clubs, did he? Villain, beastly villain! Of Enid! Goodness! if the notion of it didn't make my blood boil till I felt like a tin shaving-water jug, I could laugh till I cried. Enid! Why, any fool has only to look at her once to see behind that exquisite, delicious face a mind as sweet as a honeycomb. Her eyes, too! I'm pretty certain this sky would call itself blue if you asked it. Blue? Sky? Ho, ho! —poor old sky. How sick it must feel when Enid comes out, minus sunshade and floppy hat! No wonder the days have been dull lately. The sky and the sun are jealous! Enid! And as near as a touch I didn't go to Halkett's studio that afternoon. I didn't feel in the mood for patent leather and tepid tea cakes. Some angel must have been near me then. Why not? Perfectly certain they're just as much interested in love stories there as here. Besides, it doesn't take an angel to know that Enid and I were put on earth for each other. It was bound to be, sooner or later. Jolly glad it was sooner, though—what? Yes, it's the finest earth in the world. I know I shall make her happy. It isn't a conceited thing to say, because I can't help myself. I'm bound to. Any man could make any woman happy who loved as I love. It's not merely a thing that takes me in spasms; it's my life—it's the meaning of my being. If anything went wrong now, I—but it won't. It can't. What could? She loves me, and she's going to marry me in a week from yesterday. She said so. Gad! how I shall buck when I show her to dear old Offord. What's that? Twelve o'clock! How tired she must have been! What a beast I was to walk her so far! Wonder what she's doing now?"

Under a parasol of the palest spring green, with a look of irritation and annoyance on her still undoubtedly beautiful face, stood Enid Millom-Fraze on the steps of the hotel. Like most women who dread growing old, or rather who dread to see their girlishness ripen into full womanhood, she had been forced to take notice of several very decided crow's-feet round the corners of her

eyes. Her chin, too, she owned to herself with a gasp, was rapidly multiplying, and her hair was losing its natural color and running away from her forehead. How many years was she from thirty? She would soon be obliged to make up her mind. That impertinent question was asked by the person who invented marriage certificates. She had been twenty-three—really twenty-three—when she married Teddy Millom-Praze. It would be just as well to be twenty-three again, she thought. Frankie was twenty-three. It would be hateful to be older than one's husband.

"Husband!" she said to herself, catching sight of his Panama hat behind the timber on the quay. "That boy! It seems quaint that I should have played my cards so badly as to be driven into marriage with a mere lad—a child of moods, who despairs and adores by turns, who has only a pittance of a thousand a year. Really quaint! Some women do it from choice. I know a dozen old frumps who trot about with husbands too young to be their sons. Give me a man! A man who has thought and done and seen, who has made his mark in the world, who, by sheer, dogged force, has elbowed himself through the mob and won a place in the inclosure with the chosen. Or let him be a man, however insignificant so far as intellect goes, however insignificant physically, so that he has money—heaps of money. Money is so good a thing! Better than love—love, however well stoked, goes out! But money! Money is always bright, and will cheerfully do whatever is required of it, anywhere, any time. Oh, the chances I have muddled! Men no longer lose their heads about me. I am now made over to boys. How eagerly I clutched at Frank Ryehope—the last straw. How willingly I would slip off into the main stream if some man swam up and gave me his arm to lean upon! And here we are, off the map, with only a week of days!"

As she flung up her head in scornful laughter, she saw Frank Ryehope dancing toward her on the arm of some one obviously not a native of Caudebec—of France even—of some one she had fre-

quently noted in London with interest, whose name was frequently on everybody's lips, whose income as a K. C. was said to be enormous, whose power in the House of Commons had more than once been very strongly demonstrated. "Give me a man!" she had said.

"Enid! Enid!" cried Frankie, excitedly, bubbling with a kind of triumphant delight, "here's the dear old Worker, the Earnest Man. Enid, this is Arthur Offord, my best friend."

It wanted only four-and-twenty hours to bring the week of days to a close. It had been arranged that Enid Millom-Praze should be married to Frankie at the aged church—his church—the following day at eleven o'clock.

When the silver tongue of the aged church's patient bell announced the arrival of eleven o'clock, Frankie was waiting outside Mrs. Millom-Praze's door with a bunch of roses, and Mrs. Millom-Praze was leaning against a tree on the little hill to the east of the town, under which flowed the river, looking up into the face of Arthur Offord, who, earnestly following the plan of Browning's eagle, had given her eyes his own eyes to take, whose hand had sought hers as in earnest need.

Down below a boatman was singing snatches of a popular Paris song, and his *patois* made the indelicacy of it almost decent. Quite near them a lark had risen, and his song was throbbing above their heads. The faint smoke above the town lay like a ribbon in the breathless air.

"Well," cried Enid, with an almost pathetic quiver in her glad laugh, "and what do you see in my eyes? Shall I tell you, as you already know?" She held tight to his hand. "Something which no man has ever stirred in them. Something which I dreaded would *never* be stirred in them. Something which years ago would have made me a very different woman to the woman I am. I love you—amazingly!"

Not for the first time, but more strongly than ever before during that apparently uneventful week, Offord

wished to Heaven he had never left London—never interfered to save his friend. Enid had bent down with a sudden, an almost charming abandon, and kissed his hand again and again.

"I'm afraid the roses are nearly dead now, Enid," said Frankie, with a queer catch in his voice, as he looked from one to the other.

Mrs. Millom-Praze let Offord's hand leave hers reluctantly, and looked at Frankie as an aunt might look at her nephew, or an elder sister at a school-boy brother. And when she spoke there was a touch of tender patronage and indulgence in her voice.

"I think Mr. Offord wants to speak to you," she said. "I am going back to *déjeuner*."

Frankie watched her with flaming cheeks. Then he turned fiercely upon Offord. "Now, look here," he cried, "what does all this mean? It's just about time you explained why you came, and what you want. Do you hear? Very likely you think I've had a jolly time these last few days. Very likely you fancy it hasn't hurt me to play gooseberry to you and the woman I'm going to marry. What have I done? Of course you can't help loving her. No man can well help that. I can understand that. But to come like a thief and steal my most precious—to—to take away from me my life, my very being—is that loyalty to a friend? Is it? Is it? It's all over with me. There will be no marriage to-morrow. She needn't tell me. She loves you. It was only the sweetness of her heart that persuaded her to try and love me. Long before the end she would have loved me, too. I'll make no scene. I'll slip away. But, oh! Arthur, Arthur, what wrong have I ever done to you?"

Offord mastered his voice, and looked down very tenderly at the twitching white face of the boy. "Frankie," he said, "Millom-Praze was my best pal years ago, as you are now. His life was ruined, as yours would have been ruined. I know her life through and through. You are a student of Browning. Do you remember where these lines come, and why?

"And before my friend be wholly hers,  
How easy to prove to him, I said,  
An eagle's the game her pride prefers,  
Though she snaps at a wren instead!"

Ryehope's face became suddenly livid. He clutched Offord's arm and peered into his eyes. "They are from 'A Light Woman.' What do you—what do you—"

"I see that you understand," said Offord, quietly. "Perhaps some day, dear lad, you will forgive me the means I took to prove to you her utter worthlessness."

Ryehope covered his ears with his hands. "Your utter worthlessness, you mean. You are a liar," he shouted, "as well as a thief! I'll not listen. Let me go—let me go, I tell you!"

Through the blazing sun Offord returned to the little hotel. Over the balcony, with her eyes alight, leaned Enid Millom-Praze. As he looked up she held out both her arms to him, with a soft ripple of happy laughter, and went into the sitting room to meet him. Half an hour later Offord and his baggage were driven to the station. Before the rumble of the wheels had died away, Enid, sitting impatiently at the table, took the letter handed to her by the jaunty landlord:

I think it is unnecessary for me to tell you more than that Teddy Millom-Praze was a great friend of mine. You will then understand why I came here, and why I adopted these, the only means in my power, of showing Frank Ryehope the unwisdom of marrying you.

As Enid sat with her eyes straining at the letter, the door opened and closed sharply. Frankie flung himself on his knees at her side.

"Darling, darling, I've come back. You've sent him away. Marry me. It may be true—it may all be true, I don't care. I love you—you as you are—you as I know you!"

As the silver tongue of the aged church's patient bell wagged merrily over their heads, Frankie Ryehope set out upon the journey which was to prove to him the unwisdom of having made Enid Millom-Praze his wife.



# The First Impression—and the Last

By Robert Hichens

Author of "The Hidden Self"



VIOLET was an amazingly attractive girl. She was good looking and well made. So are many others. Her charm lay in her energy, in her warmth of feeling. She was a fire, but never a spitfire. Temper she had. And I love a woman to have a temper when she can control it. Her anger could be easily aroused, but only against contemptible things; weakness, dishonesty, cruelty, cowardice. She was made of quiet pluck. There was a touch of manliness in her—not mannishness, which is abominable in woman. Her heart was valorous, and she had a habit of looking in others for what she found in herself. I was at school with her and loved her. Although she was self-reliant she often asked my opinion about people and things. She trusted a good deal in my judgment.

Two years after our school days were over I got a letter from her. In it she asked me to come down to her people's country place, and she gave me to understand that she had a special reason for wishing to have me there at that particular time. I accepted the invitation, and went. And I very soon understood what the reason was. There were three or four people in the house. Among them was a young man. I won't give him any name. Let us call him the lover. I saw at once that he was in love with Violet. And I guessed at once that she wanted to have my opinion of him.

Now a woman judges a man by nothing that she can state accurately in

words. I imagine it to be a combination of things; his way of moving, the sound of his voice, the manner in which he looks at a child or treats a dog, the appearance of his hands, his expression in the morning early—if they both come down to breakfast—and late at night, when he is getting sleepy; and hardly know what things form together the combination. My impression of the lover—that was what Violet wanted. And that was what she asked me for the very first evening I was in the house. Need I say when we were brushing hair, toward midnight?

Now the lover was a tall, strongly built man, distinctly athletic looking and remarkably well developed. It was obvious that he could hold his own in a row, and Violet told me a good deal about his prowess in various physical ways. I listened, with the usual interpositions of "Yes," "Yes, I see," "Really!" "I'm not surprised!" and so on. At length she said:

"And now, what is your impression of him?"

"He loves you," I said.

She flushed slightly.

"I think so," she replied, in her usual straightforward way.

"Do you love him, Vi?" I asked.

"Look here," she replied, rather boyishly. "I am asking you to tell me what you think of him?"

"It's a little difficult to tell when I have only seen him for one evening."

"I never thought you could hedge with me," she exclaimed.

"Well, then," I said, quickly. "I may be utterly wrong, but I think there's something weak about him."

"Weak!" she said.

"Now, Vi, don't fire up! I say, I may be utterly wrong."

"I want to hear what you really think, of course. But I never expected you'd call him weak. Do you mean morally weak? It can't be physically, because he's much stronger than most men. In fact, he's almost a second Sandow. He can do lots of the things Sandow does."

"I'm sure he can."

"Well then——?"

She came away from the dressing table, and sat down close to me and opposite to me.

"You mean morally weak?"

"I scarcely know what I mean. It's only an impression, my first impression. I don't think if I were in any danger I should feel certain I could rely on that man."

Violet flushed still more. I could not help seeing that she was feeling really angry, and I could not help guessing that she must be really in love. She did not speak for a minute or two. At last she said:

"How d'you mean? What sort of danger?"

Now a woman can very seldom analyze a first impression. I certainly couldn't that evening.

"I haven't an idea," I said. "Probably I'm quite wrong. It's like this. With some men—whether I know them or not—I feel, 'I should be all right anywhere with you.' With others I don't feel that."

"And you don't feel that with—him?"

"I can't honestly say I do."

"I think you're quite wrong," she said. "I'm sure you are."

I noticed that when she was saying this she did not look at me. Now, as a rule, Violet couldn't speak to you without looking at you. To do so was unnatural to her. Why was she unnatural this evening?

"Are you going to marry him?" I said, longing, almost absurdly, for the answer I had no expectation of.

"Oh, I don't know," she replied, abruptly. "One may think a man a good

sort, and a"—she looked at me here, but only for a second—"a braver man than most without wishing to marry him. Bed! Bed!"

She kissed me in rather a scramble, and disappeared into her room.

Of course, being a woman, I knew by this time that she was going to marry the man.

I went to bed, feeling unreasonably depressed, even miserable. It seemed to me that Violet was on the edge of a disastrous mistake, as great a mistake as a woman of rigorous honesty would make in marrying a convicted thief. And it seemed to me also as if she had a vague suspicion that a precipice yawned at her feet, or had had such a suspicion, and not very long ago. Yet the lover was well bred, agreeable, kind, attentive and notably strong.

"What fools we women are," I said to myself at last. And I think I ought to have said: "What fools we women—aren't."

Well, of course I was right about Violet meaning to marry the man. She had fallen in love with him, and not in a light way. She had a strong nature, and loved in a strong and deep way, with passion, too, as a man might wish to be loved. She loved him, looking up to him, not down at him, with immense honesty, and trust, and fire. Violet was a glorious lover, really, and might have remade a man by loving him, one would have thought. Not that she tried. That wasn't her way at all. She thought it was man's business to do any remaking that was necessary. She wished to grow more like the lover. Poor Violet! And my first impression of the lover? It didn't deepen, but, on the other hand, it didn't fade. He really seemed a fine, manly fellow, in bearing, in all he did, in his talk. And yet I always felt—"I wouldn't trust myself to you for fear you'd fail me at the critical moment." I argued against myself, and scattered any quantity of dust into my eyes, but still they peeped, and still they saw the same thing. And the thing wasn't nice at all.

The lover was madly in love with Violet. There wasn't a doubt of that.

I know that what she gave in that way she got. But—well, sometimes I feel pretty sure that there is a devil abroad, and that he pays momentary visits to unlucky people. And when he does, they simply rush on their own damnation. Ought we to blame them? I don't know. But of course we always do, and always shall. And if the devil pays us a visit, they will blame us.

Violet and the lover became engaged, and the wedding day was fixed. Then—even love nowadays is always popping in and out of Paquin's—it was a question of trousseau. Violet's mother selected this moment as a suitable one for an attack of German measles, so Violet persuaded me to accompany her to Paris. Being a healthy, human woman, I place Paris immediately after Paradise in my estimation, as one place of ravishing reality immediately after a lovely dream. I was nothing loath to go, you may be sure. We took a sedative and sofa-loving aunt as a chaperon—her name was Stella, and we called her the Fixed Star—and “descended” at the Ritz. The lover naturally found himself in Paris at the same time, and put up at the St. James in the Rue St. Honoré.

We shopped.

Violet had never again asked me my opinion of the lover, and I did my best to make her forget my frankness. I was charming to him, and really liked him in a way. We all three went to the theaters, the galleries, the smart restaurants, the Bois, and had a good time. And they adored each other to an extent that made me feel almost weepy. Some happiness is so great that one is afraid of it even for others.

One day there was a concert for which we three had tickets.

It was an orchestral concert, but a star pianist was to play a concerto, and all Paris took seats. It was the greatest crowd I ever saw. People were standing in gangways and against the wall. Never mind which hall it was. We three had stalls next to a gangway, and we sat in this order: the lover in the outside stall next to the gangway and nearest to an exit, then Violet, then

I. I remember that on my other side there was a schoolgirl with a blond pigtail à la *Marguerite*, who was pink with pleasure and excitement. The concerto in which the star played was immediately followed on the program by Tchaikowsky's “Pathetic Symphony,” less hackneyed then than it is now. None of us had heard it. We were all really musical, not fashionably musical. I must tell you that the bit of gangway next to which the lover sat was not full of people. They were only standing lower down in the room. The concert began. We had an overture, a song. Then the star appeared to play the “Concerto.” It was the Liszt, and was superbly played. Nearly at the end of the last movement, when the whole audience was thoroughly strung up, a loud, terrible voice screamed “Fire! Fire!” There was a movement, as if the whole audience slowly shuddered. The pianist went on playing. The terrible voice screamed again, and a small wreath of smoke curled up through the opening by which the performers descend beneath the platform. Then there was a horrible panic. The pianist stopped in the midst of a cataract of notes. Quantities of people arose from their seats. Women shrieked. For a moment I was dazed. I caught hold of Violet's arm, and sat quite still, stunned by the turmoil. The schoolgirl with the blond pigtail had gone quite gray in the face, and looked suddenly very old. Violet didn't move. People were rushing out. Suddenly an elderly man hastened onto the platform, held out both his arms to the audience, and exclaimed: “There is no danger. Keep your seats. A lighted match was dropped, and set fire to a curtain. It has been extinguished. The concert will proceed.”

He signed to the conductor. (The pianist had vanished.) The conductor lifted his baton, and we heard the opening bars of Tchaikowsky's “Symphony.” You know what they express. I turned for the first time toward my companions. Violet was sitting perfectly still, leaning back in her stall with her hands folded in her lap. I noticed a shocking

expression on her face, and looked past her.

The lover's stall was empty.

I stared at it, and then at Violet. People were settling down again, reassured. A few, who had reached the exits, but not escaped from the room, slipped back furtively to their seats, like criminals. The lover was not among them. I knew afterward that on the first alarm he had gained the nearest door, and dashed through it without a glance behind.

Violet did not look at me. The "Symphony" went on. At the end of the third movement, she leaned over and put her mouth to my ear.

"Change with me!" she whispered. "Quickly!"

I looked, and saw the lover coming down the gangway toward his seat. I got up, and sat between them. During that last movement I think I was punished for all my sins. I was an agony between two agonies, and the despairing music wrapped us in a mist. None of us spoke. Only when the last

tragic muttering died away Violet bent to me again.

"Tell him to go away."

I turned toward the lover. There was shame unutterable in his eyes.

"She wishes you to go," I said.

He put his hands down on the arms of the stall, and held them for a second. Then he got up and slunk away, looking at the ground.

When we reached the hotel, and came into our rooms, we found the wedding dress spread out. Paquin had sent it while we were at the concert, and the Fixed Star had not been able to resist the temptation of taking it from its coverings.

They didn't meet again.

I had one interview with the lover, but I don't want to talk about it. Oh, but I must tell you one thing. Long afterward Violet told me that her very first impression of the lover had been the same as mine. Hers, however, had immediately died away. Mine had remained. That was the difference between us.



## THE NEW YEAR

ROSY cheeked he stands at the gate—

Nay, little New Year, pass me by!  
I bid you not and the hour is late,

Why should you tarry for such as I?  
Go where the wassail maketh din,  
And the revelers wait to watch you in.

Rosy cheeked he taps at the door,

Nay, little New Year, go your way!  
I've seen a score of your sort—and more—  
(Some one says I am bald and gray.)  
White and bright though your book may be,  
My last year's debts are enough for me.

Out in the world the glad bells ring,

What does it matter? My door is fast—  
A pity to leave him—poor, small thing,  
Out in the cold, but I've seen my last.  
So I turn to my fire—and, there—Lord knows!  
Sits the dear little New Year toasting his toes.

MARGARET HOUSTON.

# SOME DRAMATIC SURPRISES

By Alan Dale

The futility of discussing "theatrical politics." A recent production of "Much Ado About Nothing" indicates that "commercialism" is not always incompatible with "art." Other successes and failures



AR be it from me to waste valuable words upon "the strings that make the puppets dance." This topic, which assumes that the shadow is more interesting than the substance, seems to be getting popular. I notice a mistaken idea that the theater-going public understands the mysteries of theatrical politics, springing up in many directions. You can take it from me—and I give it you in black and white—that when people are obliged to stop and "look at the wheels" it is not because the wheels are worth while, but because the work that they represent is not done properly.

A strange thing has just happened, making these remarks relevant. The finest representation of a Shakespearian comedy that New York has seen in many a long day has been put forward by Mr. Charles Frohman, who—according to those to whom he is merely a name—is the high priest of "commercialism" and generally used to point a moral and adorn a tale, when it is a question of "the strings that make the puppets dance."

Oddly enough, the Shakespearian comedy in point was "Much Ado About Nothing," which was given here last season, with exultant promise, much preliminary gilt-edge stationery, and a sickening amount of highfalutin' "art" talk, by the short-lived concern calling itself the Century Players. It was Mr. Sydney Rosenfeld, who, appalled at the

gross commercialism of the stage, rose up, like a sort of Charlotte Corday in trousers, to slay the monster. Possibly, you have not forgotten.

The scene of carnage, however, was not particularly blood-curdling. Like the snake in the fable, biting at the file, and mistaking its own blood for the gore that it craved, Mr. Rosenfeld's blow recoiled upon himself. My only excuse for reviving the memory of this pathetic episode lies in the circumstance that the very Shakespearian comedy used by the Century Players as a protest against the commercialism of the stage has been presented at the Knickerbocker Theater, with splendid results and admirably artistic success, by Mr. Frohman.

When dramatic writers have nothing to discuss, when plays fail and actors disappoint, and the theatrical day seems "lank and long," they fall back upon "the strings that make the puppets dance." Theatrical politics smite the eye, and illusive irritation at cliques and factions is fomented. You get the dinner plates, when you want the dinner; the oyster shells, when you have paid for the oysters; the clothes, without the man inside them.

And now it is Mr. Frohman who has twisted "the strings that make the puppets dance," by giving Shakespeare in the most artistic fashion possible. He welded the forces of Mr. E. H. Sothern with those of Miss Julia Marlowe—a feat in itself—and dared to "present" them in "Romeo and Juliet" and "Much

Ado About Nothing." He made no dread announcements that he was going to elevate the stage. He did not insinuate that he had the slightest intention of improving us, willy-nilly, and that if we failed to appreciate his efforts, art was dead in our own souls. Mr. E. H. Sothern and Miss Julia Marlowe slipped into the Knickerbocker Theater, with "Romeo and Juliet" and "Much Ado About Nothing," just as nonchalantly and diffidently as though it were a case of "The Boy Tramp; or, The Maniac Mother."

In "Romeo and Juliet" it was Miss Julia Marlowe only who appealed. Miss Marlowe is undoubtedly one of the two actresses in this country who make Shakespeare delightful. The other is Miss Ada Rehan, whose restrictions, of course, are greater, inasmuch as the youthful heroines are no longer within her range. There never was a more charming *Juliet* than Miss Julia Marlowe. Her exquisite voice, the mutable expressions of a face that is not really beautiful, the ease and grace of manner and the idea of girlhood which she so completely simulates, form a rare and unique Shakespearian equipment.

For if the truth must be told—and it must, for when thwarted it has a most uncomfortable knack of telling itself!—nothing can plunge a modern audience into such abysmal depths of *ennui* as a Shakespearian play without histrionic illumination. This is painful, but it is true. The "language" on the subject of which we always rave—of course!—fails to shed its beauty over the foot-lights; the Elizabethan humor which in 1905 is abominably unintelligible to ninety-nine out of a hundred—the hundredth being a Shakespearian "student," who looks at words as though they were geological specimens—gets on one's nerves; the story suggests the usual inane remark: "If it were offered to a manager to-day, it would be declined without thanks."

Shakespeare to-day needs not a chowder of scenery, not a hotch-potch of costly accessory, but the very finest acting that the stage can command. It calls for actors who can speak the English

language in all its purity, without accent, or mannerism, or eccentricity, and who can forcefully convey meanings that the average uncultivated audience will be inclined to overlook.

The Shakespearian "fetic" is much overworked. To suppose for an instant that the ordinary, everyday, busy New Yorker can tumble suddenly from an elevated train—not of thought, but of locomotion—into an Elizabethan atmosphere, and enjoy it just for its own sake, is ludicrous. The manager who pretends to believe this knows how false it is. It is no disgrace to an educated man to admit that one reading of a Shakespearian play conveys little to his mind. It is only the illiterate who find Shakespeare as easy as—er—Clyde Fitch.

Therefore, I say, Shakespeare's only chance to-day lies in fine acting. The popular three-hundred-thousand-dollar production, indulged in by Mr. Beer-bohm Tree in London, to cover up the weakness of his own acting, is not Shakespeare; it is suet dumpling.

The engagement of Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern proved to be unusually interesting, although in "Romeo and Juliet" Sothern's *Romeo* failed to convince. This was not a crime on the part of the actor. We want our *Romeo*—who, if he lived to-day, would be placed by the anxious Montagues in a sanitarium—to be young, and gay, and blithe, and sunny. That is our idea. Mr. Sothern made him gloomy, dull and freighted him with care. Sothern's *Romeo* seemed to think a good deal, and it appeared to us that the one thing on earth that *Romeo* never did was—think. If he had thought, it would have implied a mental balance; if he had been mentally balanced, the play would have ended differently.

With a perfect *Juliet*, and an apparently imperfect *Romeo*, the play interested, but did not convince. It left us rather cold. If it did not carry us away, however, it carried itself away in two weeks, and then came the memorable production of "Much Ado About Nothing," than which I have seen and can imagine nothing more satisfying. Not



only was the *Beatrice* of Miss Marlowe a revelation, a complete intellectual joy, but the *Benedick* of Mr. Sothern was a fitting companion picture. They worked together in commendable harmony. They evoked subtle meanings, and added little bits of artistic "business" that were admirable.

It was Shakespeare that will never "spell ruin." In fact, it was the only way in which Shakespeare can be successfully brought home to an audience of promiscuous theater-goers. The small parts were played by such actors as G. Harrison Hunter, Sydney C. Mather, Norman Hackett, William Harris, W. H. Crompton and Rowland Buckstone, who were conventional, but generally satisfactory. Mr. Frohman must have laughed in his sleeve, as he "sprang" this production upon us without a murmur, and permitted us to see, without comment, that "the strings that make the puppets dance" are verily not worth discussing.

One of the most peculiar incidents of the month was the appearance of old Mrs. Gilbert, who—unlike Gladstone—accepted a "title," and in her eighty-fourth year allowed them to fasten upon her the somewhat opprobrious epithet of "star." Nothing could have been more pitiful than the notion that Mrs. Gilbert, at the close of her busy, artistic career, needed this term of hopeless mediocrity and garish cheapness. The "stars" of to-day are for the most part young men who understand the knack of a fashionable crease in the trousers, rather than the art of acting; they are young women who, by a fluke, have made a "hit" in some piece that necessitated their "playing themselves" instead of playing anybody else. Mrs. Gilbert, while never great in any sense of the word, has been consistently good. Moreover, she lived wisely, and retained her health. She has been mercifully enabled to act into octogenarianism. The whole illusion vanished when they called her a "star."

It was a singular occasion—the appearance of Mrs. Gilbert in "Granny" at the Lyceum Theater. It was supposed to be very affecting—quite har-

rowing, in fact. Although I'm not unduly hard-hearted, and can even shed a furtive tear in the theater, when occasion seems to warrant it, I couldn't quite grasp the beauty of this engagement. It seemed freakish—a rather ruthless endeavor to profit by a pictorial advertisement of the inevitable human end.

It was announced as Mrs. Gilbert's "farewell." The energetic playwright, Mr. Fitch, had written a maudlin little epilogue for the poor old lady to "speak." Some of us felt like harpies. There we sat, seeking an evening's entertainment in the spectacle of a fragile old actress fervently saying good-by to us forever—to the tune of two dollars per good-by. The end of a well-spent life, a life into which had been crowded quite as much of the leaven of good fortune as the average individual generally captures, did not seem to call for such a grotesque environment. It seemed like "rubbing it in."

When I say good-by, I hope that it will not be in a long, tear-dripping article, announcing my age and thanking the world for its appreciation. This world gives very little for nothing. If it has been appreciative, it is because it has had something to appreciate. That is common sense. Why should it be otherwise with the actor and actress? There was no need for Mrs. Gilbert to thank us. It was rather for us to thank her. She gave us good measure, and—well, all actors and actresses don't! She rarely failed. She was always the same—a gentle, amusing, refined and artistic old lady, whom we can never remember as anything else.

The enthusiastic pens of the reviewers moved along in the lines indicated by the "Granny" program. Their remarks breathed tearful farewells, and if the expression "dear old Mrs. Gilbert" was used once, it was used a hundred times. The only value in this lay in the fact that it suggested good feeling, kindness of heart, sympathy and affection. These count; they count a good deal, but they need not necessarily blind one's eyes to an accurate outlook.

Robbed of its sentimental exaggeration, "Granny" proved to be a play that

could never have weathered the storm on its merits. It was Clyde Fitch in his most uninspirational, tailor-made moments. But constant allusions to Mrs. Gilbert's age, and a feverish endeavor to keep her on the stage all the time, disarmed criticism. There has been so little said of "Granny" as a play, that it can rest pretty well assured that it is not one.

Mrs. Gilbert played a non-comic mother-in-law, which is rather a difficult proposition nowadays. She showed us the rebellion of a loving old woman, at the second marriage of her son-in-law, and she was the means of bolstering up a "love affair" that rather taxed the credulity of the audience. In fact, she had a great deal to do, and she did it very well. Those who did not feel nervous for her probably enjoyed their evening, in the same sort of way they would enjoy any carefully prescribed ordeal. Those who did feel nervous must have had uncomfortable moments.

The fact of committing to memory a part as long and exacting as that of *Mrs. Tompson* was in itself extraordinary. The character went through the entire play, and was its very central figure. Mrs. Gilbert was not lacking, and there was much to marvel at in her achievement.

Perhaps there are many actresses who could follow in Mrs. Gilbert's footsteps, if they could be satisfied to follow her example. Mrs. Gilbert has played "old women" ever since I can remember. I have always maintained, and still maintain, that there is a great use on the stage for old women. But how the modern actress balks at the idea! She cannot, and will not, accustom herself to the notion that she is no longer young. She would like to play *Juliet* and *Rosalind* when she is sixty! The struggle for the flying coat tails of youth is her besetting sin. Even a sensible, logical person like Mrs. Kendal—the word "person" was coined for her!—played the ingenuous bride in "The Ironmaster" when it took all the force and physical strength of the hapless Mr. Kendal to lift her into his arms.

Mrs. Gilbert never seemed to hanker

for youth. She saw possibilities in old characters, and she never refused to make the most of them. Her list at Daly's Theater is one of almost appalling length. If there were many actresses as sensible as Mrs. Gilbert, there would be more octogenarians on the stage, and we should not be asked to say a spectacular good-by to the one actress who dared to be eighty. An actress grows accustomed to an unending round of "stellar" characters—all under forty—and when she is no longer able to assume these, she dies. The cessation from activity kills. Yet it is quite possible to live, and be useful, as in the case of Mrs. Gilbert, for many additional years.

There are times when the London dramatists must feel very glad that Christopher Columbus helped them to this nice and lucrative continent. Men like Arthur Wing Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones, who are popularly supposed to keep the British Drammer warm and alive, occasionally see written across their mental tablets the cryptic sign "U. S. A." Of course when they evolve plays that set London talking, they are far too busy to bother about cryptic signs. At effulgent moments of English success, the letters "U. S. A." signify little more than the initials of provincialism. They are pallid substitutes for London.

However, it happens not unfrequently nowadays that both Mr. Pinero and Mr. Jones fail to arouse any English enthusiasm. A stupefying monotony appears to have encircled them. Pinero is always treated most beautifully by the London critics, who try to ferret out hidden meanings in his most exuberant banality. They invariably "let him down lightly," and if these tactics are pursued less rigidly with Mr. Jones—well, it is not Mr. Jones' fault.

That America is privileged to step in at the psychological moment is a fortunate event. It was in the United States that Pinero's very admirable comedy "Trelawney of the Wells" made its great success. London treated it indifferently—perhaps it was badly acted there—but New York accepted it

instantly. This curious bit of history has just repeated itself at the Garrick Theater, where Henry Arthur Jones' play, "Joseph Entangled," rapidly dismissed from London's ken, met with New York's most effervescent approval. It proved to be such a clever and delightfully whimsical piece of work that I cannot quite imagine why it failed to grip London.

It was rushed into our Garrick at the desperate moment of Mrs. Bloodgood's failure in "The Coronet of the Duchess." That poor old make-believe coronet! One felt intuitively that Denman Thompson, in "The Old Homestead," would have been a relief from it. Yet we approached "Joseph Entangled" a bit diffidently. We are still inclined to imagine that it would be slightly improper to disagree radically with London. (We never admit this, of course—oh, quite the contrary—but it is instinctive.) It is much easier to indorse a London verdict than to dis-indorse it.

But because New York loves a novel idea, amusing dialogue, bright, attractive comedy, and a little bit of intellectual flavoring, it rejoiced immediately in "Joseph Entangled," for there it found all that it wanted. The cute but slightly acidulated Mr. Israel Zangwill has given forth a precious and revolutionary opinion to the effect that New York really doesn't care for good plays, but merely for plays that constitute a fad, or a fashion. Of course we were just waiting for Mr. Zangwill's views; we felt unable to jog along without them. However, if by any chance he should wish to amend his utterances, or to temper them artistically, let him consider the case of "Joseph Entangled," and forget, if he can, that historic misfortune, "The Children of the Ghetto."

"Joseph Entangled" made its mark with singular rapidity, but this was not surprising, for the reasons I have mentioned. Its first act was so ingenious that the slight "let up" in the subsequent proceedings provoked no disappointment. Mr. Jones, who is an adept in the treatment of scandalmongery—gossiping and its results being his un-

usual specialty—showed us the subtle web of apparently incriminating evidence that closed slowly but surely around the amusing couple, *Sir Joseph Lacy* and *Lady Verona Mayne*.

They were innocent as babes. Yet by a chain of far-fetched, but by no means impossible, circumstances, they were found together at breakfast in her house during the absence of her husband. The audience is so thoroughly satisfied with the logical reasons for this *tête-à-tête* as set forth, with much straightforwardness, by the playwright, that the conclusions drawn by the other characters in the play—not as enlightened as the audience—are vastly amusing, and, at the same time, eminently intelligible. They are even more than intelligible. The cussedness of human nature would be solely responsible for just such conclusions.

The hilarious spectacle of a perfectly righteous twain, encompassed by an absolutely irresistible divorce-making set of events, gave "Joseph Entangled" a quick impetus to popularity. This time Mr. Jones was not guilty of the unpardonable trick of mystifying his audience. In freakish moments he likes to do this. In fact, London dramatists rather enjoy a practical joke, when they feel that their reputation can "stand pat." As a matter of fact, no reputation can do this, and the practical joke is resented. An instance of this may be noted in the case of "Little Mary," which was an insult rather than a comedy. Mr. Jones' "Whitewashing Julia" was somewhat similar in its effect.

"Joseph Entangled" need not be taken seriously. Mr. Jones would naturally prefer that it should be. He is one of the gentlemen who pose with a mission in life. His remarks in the preface to "The Case of Rebellious Susan" may be quoted with reference to his latest. I quote them because—well, Jones deserves to be petted a bit this time. Let him say his say: "If, my dear ma'am, you cannot see any moral in this little comedy, take it for granted that there is one, and—go and see the play again. Go and see it, my dear Mrs. Grundy, until you can find a moral in it. And

remember that it is not only trifles like this that are naturally repugnant to you. Remember how hateful to you are all the great eternal things in literature and art. So much so, that if our grand English Bible were to be now presented to the British public for the first time, you would certainly start a prosecution against it for its indecency, and its terrible polygamistic tendencies."

This will show you that a playwright who can turn out such a "flip" comedy as "Joseph Entangled" can nevertheless take himself quite seriously. I think "the great eternal things in literature and art," coming from the lips of H. A. Jones, quite lovely, don't you?

Henry Miller rehabilitated his somewhat denuded reputation in this play. He has been gallivanting through the seasons in a deadening series of "romantic" rôles. They were enough to asphyxiate him. We had already begun to label him as a lost soul, and to laugh at his mock-heroic manner and his stereotyped utterances.

He had a mania for appearing in plays that gave him a chance to apostrophize his poor mother. His poor mother was a sort of obsession, and when an actor reaches a "certain age" it is quite unnecessary for him to stir up poor mother. Yet Mr. Miller did this perpetually. He was on the verge of being snuffed out of New York. He had already inveighed against the critics—which is the first dread symptom that every specialist recognizes.

In "Joseph Entangled" he reclothed himself. He was young, modern, artistic and eminently metropolitan. His success was quite sure, and extremely pleasant, for Miller *has* done good things, and this is not the moment when we can afford to deplete our lists. Henry Miller effectively headed a cast that included Miss Hilda Spong, Miss Laura Hope Crews, J. Hartley Manners, Stanley Dark and Walter Allen—a cast that did for "Joseph Entangled" exactly what Mr. Henry Arthur Jones must have wished it would do.

A belated play by the perfervid M. Jean Richepin leaked into New York, at the Lyric Theater, under the title of

"The Harvester"—rather a peculiar rendering of the French "*Le Chemineau*." When a foreign work reaches New York so tardily, you have a perfect right to feel suspicious. It is your inalienable privilege, for the reason that foreign successes are rushed here by express steamers. When a foreign production is delayed for several years, it is generally because nobody wanted it. One feels that almost instinctively. There must have been a hitch somewhere. Assuredly no foreign production is delayed in order to make place for the American playwright. That feat of chivalry is unknown.

There was every reason for the delay of "The Harvester." In the first place, Richepin is a poet, rather than a playwright, and a French poem is—risky, if not *risqué*. It is difficult to get the atmosphere, and if you succeed in coaxing it, it is frequently not worth while. Moreover, the hero of "The Harvester" is a tramp, pure and simple, and in this country, where an idea is taken up and beaten out until it is in holes, the notion has long prevailed that a tramp is essentially funny. Many alleged comedians have made a specialty of the tramp.

In "The Harvester" he is an irresponsible being who has an illicit "love affair" with the village maiden, *Toinette*—a most serious person, and not by any means a merry little mountain maid. He loves her, and leaves her, though she is "in trouble." Thereupon she marries *François* and palms off the tramp's child upon him as his own. Need I go further? This sordid and displeasing complication seemed to lack all poetry. What it was in French, I do not know. In English, it was a bit ragged.

English is such a matter-of-fact language, isn't it? Or so it seems to us. All the i's are so accurately dotted, and all the t's so relentlessly crossed. In a play like "The Harvester" we could afford to miss a few dots, and dispense with all the crosses. During the progress of the play, and many years after *Toinette's* marriage, the tramp comes back. She is fat, comfortable and do-

mesticated, and the "love child" is an adult. The tramp is meditative, and filled with beautiful thoughts about his son. They are of no avail. We cannot accept them. Similar cases of "palm-ing" flare at us from the newspapers. We regard them as vulgar, and not even Richepin can make us think that there is an ounce of poetry about them.

Otis Skinner, who is a "romantic" actor in the best sense of the term, did all he could for "The Harvester." He even saw to it that its scenes were transplanted to French Canada, just as Mr. Tree, in London, took care to convey them to Dorsetshire. As though it mattered! Perhaps it would have been more reverent to have left them precisely where Richepin intended them to occur. At any rate, that would have placed the entire responsibility upon the shoulders of the French playwright. But Mr. Skinner seemed to imagine that he would feel more at home in French Canada. We were, moreover, regaled antecedently with more or less vital "press stories" anent his visit to that country for "atmosphere." I believe that he brought back the atmosphere in several Saratoga trunks.

The failure of "The Sho-Gun," at Wallack's Theater, would seem to suggest that the successful Mr. George Ade should avoid burning the candle at both ends; also, that the adage, "Make hay while the sun shines," is occasionally misleading. There is surely such a thing as making inferior hay, and getting singed by the aforesaid shining sun.

"The Sho-Gun" is George Ade's gentle humor in contortions. It is difficult to view "The College Widow" and "The Sho-Gun" as the works of the same humorist. In the comic opera nothing is easy and spontaneous; it is all oppressive and labored; in fact, some of its humor is not even in good taste. It is more like the effort of a professional, hard-working, relentless humor machine, than that of a blithe young man, with an ingenuous outlook. It is a contribution to the insatiate maw of invertebrate triviality, and over it Mr. Gustave Luders had showered a drenching rain of primitive music.

If "The Sho-Gun" be absolutely unsuggestive of George Ade, it is equally unlike its producer, the wily Mr. Henry W. Savage. It seemed as though Mr. Savage had forsaken his admirable policy of presenting a comedian unaffected with the Broadway goo-goo, when he placed Charles E. Evans in the very thick of "The Sho-Gun." Mr. Evans is the "Rialto" personified, and while he is an extremely energetic person, he is not ingenuously amusing. He is one of the many who can provoke a guffaw, but who can never give one the innate satisfaction that a genuine laugh produces. The beauty of Raymond Hitchcock's work in "The Yankee Consul" was that its humor was national, and not the queer, noisy, ephemeral thing that you find on Broadway, between Twenty-third and Forty-second Streets.

That "The Sho-Gun" without Mr. Evans would have been acclaimed is exceedingly doubtful, for it had no inherent merits. With a real comedian, however, it would have stood a better chance. It would, at any rate, have resembled a "Savage production."

The opening of the Weber-Ziegfeld company at the little Broadway music hall was an event that even the serious-minded delighted to honor. For good light entertainment is, after all, a serious matter, and even the devotees of Ibsen and Maeterlinck were obliged to pause aghast, as they tried to analyze the spell that Weber and Fields exercised upon this community. The Weber-Ziegfeld offering is cast in similar grooves, and suggests occult popularity. The critic has nothing to do with it. It is not a fitting subject. Miss Anna Held has joined the effulgent forces, and that aggressively vital lady, Miss Marie Dressler, is given full scope, of which she avails herself most successfully.

After an overdose of drama, Weber and Fields were always looked upon as the finest pick-me-up in Manhattan. If good wishes mean anything—and they mean "thought waves," which are strongly recommended to-day—the Weber-Ziegfeld aggregation will be regarded in a similarly optimistic light.

# FOR BOOK LOVERS

By Archibald Lowery Sessions

The autumn announcements of fiction contain little that lends itself easily to classification. A good many meritorious stories, and some notable ones. Reviews of "Love in Chief," "The Man on the Box," "The House of Fulfillment" and others



HE publishers' autumn announcements of fiction contain lists of novels sufficiently miscellaneous in character to suit the most catholic taste. Indeed, it seems almost as though,

taken as a whole, variety was the most conspicuous feature of the season's new books, though it does not necessarily follow that it is the definite, coherent heterogeneity that is, according to Herbert Spencer, characteristic of an advanced stage of evolution. It is more likely that it is only a literary vagary.

People who take pleasure in making classifications and discovering new types, stimulated either by a methodical habit of mind or by a notion that the process constitutes the most important part of literary criticism, will find but little to encourage their efforts at generalization; in fact, there is no material in the subject for inductive inferences that amounts to anything.

Neither is there much satisfaction to be derived by those who take a certain solemn pleasure in the invention of real or fancied "tendencies" in fiction, for current fiction, as it seems to us, is destitute of any element upon which such a judgment can legitimately be based. As a matter of fact, attempts to reach conclusions on this subject are apt to involve distinctions ordinarily somewhat too subtle for practical purposes, for it may be truly said that the causes of literary tendencies are too remote and too

far beneath the surface ever to be handled profitably by contemporary criticism.

Nevertheless, if past experience amounts to anything, there is only too much reason to conclude that the autumn crop of fiction will stimulate the usual amount of more or less philosophical discussion.

There is very little probability that the pessimists will be convinced that there is offered to them any substantial reasons for their conversion; they will doubtless continue to insist in taking pleasure, gloomy or cynical, as the case may be, in reiterating their conclusion that "fiction is deteriorating" or growing still more bourgeois. Indeed, the war of words goes briskly on without a symptom of abatement. But, after all, it is not a matter that need be taken too seriously; the devil's advocate has a useful and even necessary function to perform, but saints continue to be canonized; and meritorious stories will still be published and read; perhaps in greater numbers because of the usefulness of the literary carper.

The general average of excellence of the season's new novels is no lower than that of recent years. If it is, on the whole, no higher, it can at least be said that it includes some books of a good deal more than ordinary quality, judged by a purely literary standard, whatever their commercial success may turn out to be. Some of these books, for example, "Manassas," "Susan Clegg and Her



Friend Mrs. Lathrop," "The Madigans" and "The Woman Errant" have already been reviewed in this department; others are noticed this month, and there is a list, much longer than usual, for next month.

A novel beyond all question admirable is Rose K. Weekes' "Love in Chief," published by Harpers.

Taking as her text the lines,

"One should master one's passions (love in chief),  
And be loyal to one's friends,"

the author has developed a plot the theme of which is the mutual devotion of two men, in spite of a rivalry, which might otherwise have become bitter, for the favor of a girl.

It may be said in all truth that this situation, of itself, is no novelty, that it has been worked before, again and again; but the story is redeemed from the charge of triteness by the peculiar charm of the characters and the strength of the strange relations existing between Lucian and Farquhar. In these things the interest of the story centers, even to the exclusion of the very delightful and matter-of-fact heroine, Dolly Fane.

Having accomplished this, the author has shown her unerring instinct in working out the plot so as to leave the two friends with a common sorrow in the loss of the girl to a third man, establishing their friendship without subjecting their loyalty to too great a strain.

It is a fine story, told with an unusual discrimination and reserve, developed in a plot so well balanced that the reader's interest is maintained throughout with no effort.

\*\*\*

That it is an impossible story is the first impression one gets after reading Harold MacGrath's "The Man on the Box," Bobbs-Merrill Co., and it must be confessed that the impression persists in spite of the author's assurance—given with an air of perpetrating a joke on his readers, it is true—that it "is a really-true story."

It is hardly worth while, however, to emphasize this point, considering how interesting and entertaining the story is. One thing is certain, that if any man could have conceived and had the courage to carry out any such hare-brained scheme as that of Lieutenant "Bob" Warburton, it would have been just such a young fellow as he proved himself to be; which is to say that Mr. MacGrath has been artistic enough to make his hero's performances consistent with his character. He is an extremely likable young man, a thorough gentleman, in the best and highest sense of that much abused term, with the unusual degree of courage that enables him to carry to its conclusion any honorable program that he marks out for himself, regardless of consequences.

It would be a pleasant duty to speak as unreservedly in praise of Miss Betty Annesley, the heroine of the story, but candor compels the admission that, though she is very beautiful, her attractions end there. Her character is stiff, artificial, even awkward—as she appears in the story. It doesn't seem possible that Mr. MacGrath has done her justice.

The episode of Colonel Annesley's plan to betray his country seems hardly necessary to the story, though it does supply what may be presumed to be the need for a villain, in the person of Count Karloff, who, after all, freed from the influence of Russia's peculiar code of ethics, is a very decent sort of fellow.

\*\*\*

"At Home with the Jardines," by Lilian Bell, L. C. Page & Co., is a series of short stories, connected but still independent of each other, in all of which the same characters appear, in circumstances varying with the problems and exigencies of domestic life.

They have previously appeared in different magazines as short stories, and collected now in one volume, they make a tolerably coherent whole.

Neither the theme nor the treatment is altogether novel, embracing as they do the experiences, amusing, sentiment-

tal and pathetic, of a newly married couple, but, nevertheless, Mrs. Bogue has succeeded in making an interesting story of the encounters of her attractive friends with the perplexities and vexations of metropolitan life on a limited income.

The servant question, fortunately for them, was one of the least of their troubles. Indeed, so smoothly did this part of their household machinery run, that we can imagine that many readers will find this the least convincing part of the story.

On the other hand, if children in apartment houses produce such consequences as are described in this book, it can easily be understood how necessary exhortations against race suicide may become.

But, taken altogether, Mrs. Bogue represents the Jardines as a very cheerful and happy couple who, in spite of a variety of troubles, succeeded in making life together very well worth living.



Frank Moore Colby's "Imaginary Obligations," Dodd, Mead & Co., is a volume of short essays containing the author's reflections on some popular superstitions, fads and shams.

Mr. Colby's pungent comments on the solemn follies that people take so seriously are always entertaining and often instructive, and in spite of the keenness of his thrusts, he is always free from malice. He discusses a number of topics which "are transitory, but bound to recur," because, as he says, he was amused by their absurdity, "but incidentally they show why so many of us grow old rigidly or develop an alarming spiritual pomposity in middle age."



"Hope Hathaway," by Frances Parker, C. M. Clark Publishing Co., is "a story of Western ranch life," and as such is, of course, one of action.

The central point of the plot around which the story is constructed is a phase of the irrepressible conflict between cat-

tle-men and sheep-men, in the development of which the story is given its full share of battle, murder and sudden death.

Hope Hathaway, whose father is the owner of a cattle ranch, and therefore unreservedly participates in the hatred of the despised sheep-men, takes a leading part in the collisions between the two parties, and as she is a young woman of a fearless disposition and a dead-shot, in spite of her Eastern education and associations, her assistance is considered to be something decidedly worth seeking.

One of the principal offenders, in the eyes of the cattlemen, is Edward Livingston, a young Englishman who, in all innocence, had established a sheep ranch in the neighborhood. A love affair is developed between him and the heroine, and as it turns out finally that Livingston is really an English lord, the ending is more than happy.



"American" is an adjective that has come to be used with an extraordinary and even reckless lack of discrimination among Americans themselves. It almost seems, at times, as though its use was a symptom of an impoverished vocabulary.

An entirely appropriate use of it, however, is in its application to "A Happy Average," by Brand Whitlock, Bobbs-Merrill Co., for in every particular that is at all essential to the story it is typically American. Characters, atmosphere, action, plot would be meaningless if used to present a picture of life elsewhere than in the Middle West. The author is complete master of his theme and setting, and in entire sympathy with his people.

It is, first of all, a love story, and that it is true love is sufficiently guaranteed by the fact that its course was not smooth. That the consummation was not disastrous was due more to the loyalty and steadfastness of Lavinia Blair than to the perseverance of her lover, Glenn Marley. To the reader, Marley seems to have surrendered a little too

easily his attempt to establish a law practice in the Ohio town of Macochee; he is almost too raw and unsophisticated and impressionable for a modern hero, falling in love, as he did, fresh from college, before he had even decided upon his career, much less gained a foothold in the world. Nevertheless, he showed therein his purely human side, and in doing so made Mr. Whitlock's story possible.

All of the characters are typical, and their doings are familiar, but none the less interesting.



A love story, pure and simple, different in every essential particular from her previous work in the "Emmy Lou" stories, is George Madden Martin's new book "The House of Fulfillment," published by McClure. The title is from a poem by William Morris.

Its scenes are laid in the South, mostly in Louisville and partly in Florida, and the characters are Southern men and women, but it cannot be said to possess a distinctively Southern atmosphere or to be a story of an exclusively local type.

While it is not the sort of book to make a sensation from any point of view, either as to novelty or strength of plot, or profound and vivid characterization, it is, nevertheless, a thoroughly creditable and convincing piece of work. The best part of it is the work upon the characters of Austen Blair, Mollie and Charlotte, who are made, from an artistic standpoint, natural and satisfactory representatives of the types to which they belong.



Dr. Weir Mitchell's book, "The Youth of Washington," Century Co., most people will be likely to find unsatisfactory, because the average reader, presumably not a close student of history, will be either unable or unwilling to separate the fact from the fiction. And this is especially true of the account of the earlier years of Washington's life, as to which the reader should be warned that the bulk of it is fiction, for the information

respecting this period is, to say the least, meager.

The later years of his youth, and those at the beginning of his manhood, are handled by Dr. Mitchell with a freedom which he has used legitimately, considering the character of the book, and one is conscious of sharing with the author a certain feeling of relief in getting away from a difficult and more or less delicate theme.

Dr. Mitchell has skillfully developed, in his picture of the evolution of Washington's character, the fact that his genius consisted of an infinite capacity for taking pains rather than in any extraordinary intellectual gifts.

He has also been notably successful in grasping the self-restraint which was characteristic of Washington's style. If the book is read with discrimination and with patience, the result, it seems to us, will be to assist the reader to a better conception of Washington's character.



Perhaps the most notable feature of Myrtle Reed's musical romance, "The Master's Violin," published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, is the character of Aunt Peace, who is neither musical nor romantic.

An attractive, pretty, refined old lady with little experience and evidently no comprehension of the strenuous life about her, still she has a decided intellectual strength and a certain tenacity of opinion that makes her something of a bigot, although a gentle and inoffensive one. Her views on the absorbing question of love have such a distinct tinge of originality that she will probably find few to agree with them. "I may be wrong," she says, with the air of one who knows she is right, "but I have always felt that it was indelicate to allow one's self to care for a gentleman."

Aside from Aunt Peace, the book is a more or less conventional love story—or, rather, two love stories in one—with a musical setting.



Most readers will remember the stir created about four years ago over the

authorship of "An Englishwoman's Love Letters," and how the responsibility was finally placed upon Laurence Houseman. His new book, "Sabrina Warham," Macmillan, has something of the same atmosphere of psychology, showing, perhaps, a weakness on the author's part for that type of story; otherwise they have nothing in common.

It is rather a somber story, in the course of which none of the characters seem able to extract any real joy from life, partly because of their environment, both of locality and circumstance, and partly, perhaps even largely, because of intellectual and moral incapacity to enjoy.

In reading the book one cannot help feeling that the author has been at infinite pains over all the details, but yet has failed to produce a really finished piece of work because of a certain vagueness of outline, especially noticeable in the drawing of the characters.

The theme of the story is Sabrina Warham's solution of the phase of the sex problem that was presented to her. There is nothing especially novel or dramatic in the narrative.



A thoroughly characteristic story is Rosa Nouchette Carey's new book, "At the Moorings," published by Lippincott.

It might easily be dismissed by saying that anyone who has read one of Miss Carey's stories has read them all. But that would not in the least impair the effect of the fact of the popularity of her work.

"At the Moorings" differs from her previous work in no essential detail; there is the same coterie of eminently respectable ladies and gentlemen, cultivated, refined, intelligent, mostly professional men, clergymen, lawyers and doctors; women generally of domestic habits and tastes. There is nothing sordid, vulgar or strenuous in their lives, which are regulated by a consistent, though not burdensome, sense of duty, and their pleasures, though mild and harmless, seem satisfying, and their love affairs entirely reputable.

The new book is, of course, a love story. Miss Carey's admirers will take solid comfort in it, just as they would derive satisfaction in meeting again and again a lot of pleasant, entertaining friends.



"The Girl and the Kaiser," by Pauline Bradford Mackie, Bobbs-Merrill Co., is a short story and rather slight, with nothing especially noteworthy in the way of plot, and hence rather difficult to classify.

It is hardly more than the recital of some details of the visit to Germany of a young woman born in America of German parents, in the course of which the Emperor William is introduced for the purpose evidently of utilizing some of his more notorious idiosyncrasies.

The heroine has two love affairs, both with young German army officers, but there is nothing in these encounters to indicate that these young men are any worse, or in any other respect very different, from the same class in America, in spite of the disclosures of Lieutenant Bilse in his book on German garrison life.

It only remains to be said that, with the Kaiser's assistance and approval, the heroine's love affairs reach a successful and happy issue.



Another of AINSLEE'S novelettes appears this autumn as a book. "The Custodian," by Archibald Eyre, which was published in the May number, has now been brought out by Henry Holt & Co. in an attractive binding and with a series of excellent illustrations by Penrhyn Stanlaws.

There is a vein of geniality, amounting at times to genuine humor, running through the story, which, with the simple, flowing style, makes the book easy and entertaining reading.

When such people as the Count and his son, William, the Duchess and Oswald and the Princess are brought into contact with each other, results are sure to be interesting; but any predictions beyond that are dangerous.

V  
1  
4  
-  
e

7

7